

The sounds of Cuban music

Evolution of instrumental ensembles in Cuba



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Synopsis

The purpose of this essay is to present to the readers a chronological summary of the evolution of instrumental ensembles in the history of Cuban music, from the discovery of the Island to the present day. In this essay the timbre component of the most prominent genres and styles of Cuban music is analyzed, and the following aspects are addressed:

The Renaissance *vihuela* and *viol* were the first musical instruments heard in Cuba after the drums, flutes and conchs performed by the original population of the Island; the 17th and 18th century *guitar* in Cuba; how were the first African drums heard on the Island?; what instruments was the Esteban Salas's orchestra composed of?; instrumental groups, orchestras and bands in the 18th century; the *guitar*, *piano* and *violin* in the 19th century; with what instruments was the Cuban *contradance* performed?; Afro-Cuban instruments are integrated for the first time into the symphony orchestra; the sounds of the Carnival in the 19th century; the *tiple* and the *güiro* in the Cuba countryside music; How did the *danzón* sounded like? What is a *French charanga*?; the duos, trios, quartets, sextets and septets of the *son*, and the new Afro-Cuban instruments; orchestras and bands in the 20th century; the *guitar* and the *piano* in the 20th century; the Cuban jazz band; popular ensembles and orchestras in the 20th century; Cuban *rock*; the new *conga* of Miami Sound Machine; the *songo*, the *timba*, the *reggaetón* and the *guapanga*.

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A preliminary reflection

In order to achieve the fullest possible understanding of a particular style or musical genre, it is essential to know most of the elements that constitute its structure. It is not enough to have information about the nature of some of its characteristics, such as melody, texture and rhythm to form an objective idea of how certain ancient musical styles sounded, since their instrumentation is as important as all the other parameters.

Unfortunately, in many occasions that particular characteristic is not specified in the musical notation, and we must carry out collateral investigations based on other sources, such as the visual representation of some musical instruments, which allow us to reproduce as accurately as possible the timbre of the analyzed works.

Before the invention of the phonograph, we could only know how a musical work from the past actually sounded like through written information; either based on some system of musical notation or by handwritten or printed documents. In many cases, such as in medieval music, it is not possible to know at all with what instruments certain works were performed; and in other cases, such as that of the European and Cuban contradance of the 18th century, we can only obtain partial information about their instrumentation, and even about some other elements of its musical texture.

For example, in the contradances published in Paris at the end of the 18th century, it was customary only to write the melody performed by the violin, based on which the other instruments improvised the accompaniment, such as in the score of a German contradance called *Les Plaisirs de L'Arquebuse* found in the Library of Congress of the United States.¹

In the case of the nineteenth-century Cuban *guaracha*, some printed sheet music is preserved, such as that of *La Guabina* which bears the inscription: "La Guabina, Cuban Guaracha, Arranged for Song and Piano, By EG De M. Mellado", which suggests the preexistence of a different original instrumentation, from which the piano version was made.

From Cuban the contradances and dances, we have received only piano scores that were published since the early nineteenth century, but we know from some written testimonies that this music was also performed by orchestral and choral groups. As an example of the previous statement we could mention the testimony of the renowned researcher, Zoila Lapique, who mentions a comment on the subject published in the newspaper *La Prensa* on February 17, 1843: "The choristers of both sexes of the company will sing waltzes, dances and *rigodones*, with appropriate verses, to the rhythm of the orchestra ..." and also tells us in reference to a

¹ Les plaisirs d'arquebuse – Contradanse Allemande. 17... Paris. Library of Congress [Contredanses;description des figures, plan des figures] [book]. 5v.: ill., music; 21-22 cm.
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/ihis/loc.music.musdi.096/pageturner.html?page=8&from=contactsheet>

dance of the same year: "Many young ladies, engaged with taste and elegance, danced the Cuban *dance* and the ravishing *wals* [sic.], to the sound of a complete orchestra..."²

In this work we offer a chronological compilation of testimonies about the different instrumental formats used in Cuban music in general, so that it can facilitate us the approximation to an idea as objective as possible about the original sounds of our musical past.

The first sounds

The vihuela and the viola

The *vihuela* and the *viol* of the Renaissance were, apparently, the first musical instruments whose sounds were heard in Cuba after the drums, flutes and horns made of seashells, that the original inhabitants of the Island performed at their parties and religious rites.³ In the Villa de Trinidad, during the 16th century, a musician named Juan Ortiz is mentioned by the chronicler Bernal Díaz del Castillo as "a great player of *vihuela* and *viol*," as well as another *vihuelist*, the Bayamés Alonso Morón.⁴

In 1680, the singer and guitarist from the Spanish city of Burgos, called Lucas Pérez de Alaiz, arrived in Havana. He was hired to participate in the Cathedral's Music Chapel, which had been created only three years earlier, in 1677.⁵ Already in the 18th century, more specifically in 1722, we find in Santa Clara small groups of guitars and *bandolas*, created with the purpose of providing entertainment to the population. The *bandola* is an instrument of the family of the *bandurria* and the Spanish *lute*, that disappeared from the musical practice in the Island of Cuba, but still survives today in diverse towns of the Americas.

We even found information about some groups made up of *guitars*, *bandolas*, *flutes* and *fifes* (treble natural flute) in Santiago de Cuba; which were performed at the San Juan and Santiago Apostle celebrations.⁶ Those were some of the instruments which accompanied the music that was sung and danced in the villages and the courts of Spain, during that same time.

² Lapique, Zoila: *Presencia de la Habanera*, publicado en Panorama de la Música Popular Cubana, Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1998, p. 157.

³ Herández Ramírez, Giselda; Izquierdo Díaz, Gerardo: *Enseñanza de la música aborigen en el Instituto Superior de Arte. De la Investigación al aula*. Cuba arqueológica. Año III| num. 1| 2010. http://cubaarqueologica.org/document/ra3n1_06.pdf

⁴ Giro, Radamés. *Leo Brouwer y la guitarra en Cuba*. Editorial Letras cubanas. La Habana, Cuba, 1986. p. 17

⁵ Carpentier, Alejo: *La música en Cuba*, Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1979, p. 58

⁶ Giro: 1986, p. 18 - 19

The style of those danceable songs, whose rhythm, called *hemiola* or *sesquiáltera*, came predominantly from the Afro-hispanic traditions, served as a source for the creation of new native genres such as the creole *Punto* and *Zapateo*. Those new genres utilized the timbre of the original stringed instruments, such as the *guitar*, the *bandurria* and the Spanish *lute*; as well as other later modifications such as the *tiple* and the Cuban *tres*.

The first African drums

The music of the Africans who arrived as servants or slaves from Spain, or directly from Africa, was also heard in Cuba since a very early stage of its history. Those Africans were allowed to create mutual aid societies and religious fraternities as early as in the 16th century.

According to David H. Brown, those societies, which were called *cabildos* or councils, “provided in case of illness or death, celebrated masses for the deceased, collected funds for the release of their enslaved members, regularly organized dances and recreational activities on Sundays and holidays, and sponsored masses, processions and Carnival dances (now called *comparsas*) around the annual cycle of Catholic festivals.”⁷

During certain Sundays, the celebrations of saints and some important holidays, the *cabildos* organized large street processions where their leaders and companions dressed in costumes that resembled kings and high military ranks garments; while those who participated in the processions and dances wore “feather headdresses and African masks with horns and plant ornaments.” Kings Day, which was celebrated on January 6 during the Epiphany, was the most important of those festivities.⁸

Another important celebration, where the *cabildos* participated, was the one that corresponds to the three days before Ash Wednesday, which became the holyday known as *Carnestolendas* or *Carnival*.⁹ Already in 1697, the Italian Gemeli Careri mentions those celebrations when he tells us: “... on Sunday, February 9, blacks and mulattos, with picturesque costumes, formed a congregation to have fun at the Carnival.” This is supposedly the oldest information preserved about the celebration of Carnival parties in Havana.

Virtudes Feliú tells us that: “... This is the oldest reference related to traditional Havana *comparsas* (Carnival music and dance groups) and makes it clear that indeed the blacks and mulattos had fun in the *Carnestolendas* celebrated by Hispanics and their descendants, wearing unusual clothes of their own and participating in a group that Careri calls

⁷ Brown, David H.: *Santería enthroned*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2003, p. 34.

⁸ Brown, David H.: 2003, p. 35.

⁹ Feliú, Virtudes: *La Fiesta. Fiestas populares tradicionales de Cuba*. Instituto Andino de Artes Populares, p. 83.

"congregation", probably because the term *comparsa* was not yet used (or he did not know about it)."¹⁰

Although there is no extant data about the instruments that were used in the festivities of the old *cabildos*, we can deduce that those were the African membranophones that were not destined for ritual celebrations, such as the drums of *bembé*, and *yuka*. In reference to the difference between African ritual drums, which could only be performed in religious celebrations, and the profane, who could be played in public, Argeliers León tells us: "Unlike the *batá* and *iyesá* ritual drums, which were tuned by means of a tension system in N ..., the *bembé* drums could be tightened by means of heat, because they did not possess the ritual character of the consecrated drums..."

Leon also says in this regard that "... There is a great variety of *bembé* drums, from the large ones - cylindrical and over a meter high - to small drums made of container barrels. In certain areas of Cuba, the *bembé* drums are made of palm trunk, with a single nailed patch, and a little over half a meter high..."¹¹

The *yuka* set was formed by three drums made of rustic logs (called in size order: *caja*, *mula* and *cachimbo*) with ox leather patches nailed to the body of the drum. They also used to beat over a hollowed piece of bamboo called *guagua* or *catá*, or directly over the drum side.¹²

The description of these instruments coincides, in regard to their length [since one meter is approximately equal to four feet], with those that Cuban writer Francisco Baralt mentioned while describing a typical festival of black slaves, as early as 1846: "The only instrument used in this holiday season is a kind of drum made from a single piece of wood, two or four feet long, irregularly shaped and roughly approaching the conical or cylindrical figures, hollow halfway, and more generally drilled and covered at the end of larger diameter with a ram or goat leather, shaved and not tanned."¹³

These descriptions also coincide with the visual representations of Carnivals, in Havana during the 19th century, by artists such as Víctor Patricio de Landaluze and Federico Mialhe; where cylindrical drums with nailed patches (without tensors), straddled between the legs of the drummers, appear frequently; much like the *Yuka* drums are still played today. We must consider that these ancestral styles of execution have been preserved as fossil genres, with few variations, until present time.

¹⁰ Feliú, Virtudes: p. 86.

¹¹ León, Argeliers: 1981, p. 46.

¹² León, Argeliers: 1981, p. 67.

¹³ Baralt, Francisco: *Escenas Campestres, Baile de los negros*. http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/costumbristas-cubanos-del-siglo-xix--2/html/fef805c0-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_7.htm. Retrieved 12-23-15

Virtues Feliú, citing María Teresa Rojas, also mentions some shaken idiophones¹⁴ that were used in the ancient Carnival representations: "...we have news that in Havana the Carnestolendas were celebrated since long before 1585... In small numbers (four or six) the blacks came out with *marugas*, *rattles*, *güiros* and *jingle bells*, or singing solo squeaky tunes... ”¹⁵

The sounds of Europe in Cuba

During the first half of the 18th century, Alejo Carpentier mentions the existence of a family of musicians in Santiago de Cuba: "... the mother, Doña Bernarda Rodríguez de Rojas, a creole born in 1686, was a harpist; her husband, Leonardo González, composed *seguidillas*; their daughter, Juana González, singer and violinist, had married Lucas Pérez Rodríguez, son of the Cathedral's singer... ”¹⁶

On February 8, 1764, Esteban Salas y Castro, appointed teacher of the new music chapel recently founded in the Cathedral, arrived in Santiago de Cuba. He was also the first Cuban composer whose work has been preserved until present times.

Esteban Salas had a small instrumental-vocal ensemble under his direction, composed of three tiples (sopranos), two altos (contraltos), two tenors, two violins, a violin (cello), two *bajones* (primitive bassoons), a harp and an organ. With the passing of time, flutes, oboes, French horns and violas were added to the ensemble, thus "... becoming a small classical orchestra, capable of performing, by the end of the century, symphonies of Haydn, Pleyel, Gossec, as well as religious music from Paisiello, Porpora and Righini. ”¹⁷

In 1793, shortly after the insurrection of the slaves in Santo Domingo, numerous fugitive settlers arrived in Santiago de Cuba, where they began to rebuild their lives through different occupations, among which was the teaching and practice of music. In this regard, Carpentier mentions that: "... A musician, Monsieur Dubois, founded the first colored band of Santiago ..." and also that: "... One Karl Rischer and Madame Clarais, who had brought a harpsichord, founded an orchestra which consisted of: piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, trumpet, three French horns, three violins, viola, two cellos and drums ... ”, and Carpentier continues

¹⁴ Idiófonos sacudidos: Son instrumentos que deben ser sacudidos para producir sonido. Los mas famosos son las maracas y los cascabeles. *Organología*. <https://organologia-grupo1.wikispaces.com/4.3.Sacudidos>. Retrieved: 10-19-15.

¹⁵ Feliú, Virtudes: p. 84.

¹⁶ Carpentier: 1979, p. 58

¹⁷ Carpentier: 1979, p. 62.

explaining: “Before the arrival of the French the minuet was danced only, in a very small circle of the Cuban aristocracy. Now, the fugitives popularized him, also bringing the gavotte, the passepied, and of course the contradance ...”¹⁸

According to Ned Sublette,¹⁹ French immigrants founded the Tivoli neighborhood in Santiago de Cuba and soon began offering various parties and dances. In 1799 the first soirées were celebrated, where one of the only two orchestras that existed in Santiago at that time was utilized. Those orchestras were composed of black and mulatto musicians, and according to Zoila Lapique they consisted of: “one or two clarinets, two or three violins, two horns, a bass they called a violin, and, finally, a bass drum they named *tambora*.”²⁰

Ned Sublette continues explaining that: “The coffee plantations of immigrants from Saint Domingue were designed in the style of the elegant 18th-century French gardening, with avenues and paths that extended under the shade of tall trees, beneath which they grew coffee plants, carefully lowered to a height of five or six feet. Over time, these estates became rural cultural centers, whose mansions included libraries, billiards, dance halls and chapels. Their owners organized elegant soirées, just as they did in Saint Domingue, where black musicians played in groups composed of violin, cello, harp and flute.”²¹

According to Zolia Lapique, the Cuban-Spanish customs writer Buenaventura Pascual Ferrer tells in a letter how the dances were in Havana at the end of the 18th century: “... The gatherings of the important people are made up of good musicians and the French [contradance] school is danced in them.”²² This description suggests that the contradance was already interpreted at that time by an instrumental ensemble.

Also towards the end of the 18th century “... the *clave* (clavicembalo or harpsichord) was visibly displaced by the *pianoforte* ...” and according to the announcements published in the Havana newspaper *Papel Periódico*, “a forte-piano with exquisite voices, made in London was offered for sale in September 1792...”²³

From the second half of the 18th century the economic and social situation of the island underwent a drastic transformation. Until then, Cuba had been subject to numerous trade restrictions by the Spanish government and had an outdated economic subsistence system; but

¹⁸ Carpentier: 1979, p. 100.

¹⁹ Sublette, Ned: *Cuba and its music*. Chicago Review Press, Inc., 2004, p. 116.

²⁰ Lapique, Zoila: 1998, p. 144

²¹ Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 117.

²² Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 117.

²³ Carpentier: 1979, p. 82.

some historical events such as the seizure of Havana by the English crown in 1762, and the establishment of the House of Bourbon in Spain, conducted the Island to a very positive change that led it towards a path of development, through the establishment of an economy based on the extended cultivation of various products destined to export, such as sugar cane, tobacco and coffee.²⁴

The nation in general, and particularly the city of Havana, underwent great changes, which were reflected in an improvement in its living standards and an increase in urban development and cultural activities.

Between the governments of the Marquis de La Torre and Luis de Las Casas (1771 to 1796), new fortresses were built, such as La Cabaña, El Príncipe, Atarés, La Chorrera, Cojímar, and Torreón de San Lázaro. The Plaza de Armas was born, which contained the Palacio del Segundo Cabo and that of the Capitanes Generales; and the Church proceeded with the installation of the Main Parish, which later became the Cathedral of Havana. Between 1792 and 1794, the Main Theater, also called the Coliseo or the Alameda, the Casa de Beneficencia and the Alameda de Paula were built.²⁵

As a summary of the instrumental formats evolution in our music, from the discovery of the Island until the 18th century, we can say that the first musical instruments used in Cuba after its discovery in 1492 were the *vihuela* and the *viol*, most likely as they were used in Spain towards the end of the fifteenth century, in their modalities of *hand vihuela* and *bowed vihuela* (*vihuela de mano* and *vihuela de arco*).

According to David Puerta Zuloaga: "At the end of the fifteenth century, the *vihuelas* were instruments in the form of an elongated number eight, with a flat bottom and straight mast, and the pegbox at a null or very small angle to the mast." The number of strings varied between ten and fourteen, depending on whether they had 5, 6 or 7 "courses" or pairs of strings. These courses were tuned in unison, or with one of the strings at an octave lower than its companion.

Three types of *vihuela* were distinguished: The *bowed vihuela*, which, as its name implies, required a horsehair bow for its execution. Bowed *vihuelas* evolved towards the *violas da gamba*, which in turn gave rise to the current violoncello. The *vihuela de péñola*, which was played with a feather or plectrum; which, in symbiosis with the *mandoras* (*lutes* of a treble tuning), were the immediate ancestors of the *bandurrias* and *mandolins*. And finally, the *hand vihuela*, which was played by plucking the strings with the finger tips."²⁶

²⁴ Rodríguez Ruidíaz, Armando: *El origen de la música cubana. Mitos y Realidades*, 2015, p. 41.

²⁵ Sorhegui, Arturo. *La trascendencia de la legislación en la evolución del puerto de la habana (1520 – 1880)*. Retrieved: Agosto 25, 2010, http://www.estudiosatlanticos.com/aehe_files/Arturo_Sorhegui.pdf

²⁶ Puerta Zuloaga David: *Los caminos del tiple*, Ediciones AMP, Bogotá, 1988. Retrieved: 09-16-15. <http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/musica/tiple/indice.htm>

The name of these instruments is related to a family of terms that has broad ramifications, and whose beginning is usually attributed to various ancient instruments such as a small Latin lyre called *fidicula*, which generates the denominations *fielle* or *vielle* in medieval French, *viole* in Italian, *viola*, *viela* and *vihuela* in Spanish, *fidele* in Anglo-Saxon, *fiddle* in English, as well as *fiedel* and *viedel* in High German.

On the other hand, according to David Puerta: “the name of *vihuela*, according to the general opinion, comes from the Latin words *fides* and *fidúcula*, “string”. In medieval Latin, these nouns were transformed into *fidula*, *vitula*, *citola*, *vigola* and finally *vigüela* or *vihuela*. [...] Since the 13th century the definitive name had been assigned. The anonymous text *Book of Apollonius* reads: “*A guisósse la duenya, fiziénronla logar! tenpró bien la vihuela en un son natural.*” [...]”²⁷

Fernando Rodrigo tells us regarding this issue: “There are references to the use of hand and bowed *vihuelas* by musicians at the service of Prince Don Juan before his death in 1497; also, the regulations for the trade of violeros contained in the Seville ordinance of 1502 mention several types of *vihuelas*. Regarding the presence of the *vihuela* in America, documents in the Archivo de Indias indicate that in the fleet of Diego Colón to Santo Domingo, which departed from Seville and Sanlúcar in 1509, Secretary Rui González carried a ‘vihuela and Cuerdas [strings]’, and that throughout the sixteenth century “vihuela strings” were brought from Spain as well as copies of the Fuenllana, Narváez and Daza figured music books.”²⁸

In 1680, singer and guitarist Lucas Pérez de Alaiz arrived in Havana from Burgos, to participate in the Cathedral's music chapel. The instrument played by Pérez de Alaiz was no longer the old *vihuela*, but the most modern baroque *guitar*, called Spanish guitar, since it was in Spain that Vicente Espinel added a fifth string to the *four orders* (pairs of strings tuned in unison or octave) Renaissance guitar, a practice that was later imitated throughout Europe. Baroque guitars were generally built according to the prevailing baroque complex style, with the most luxurious materials and profuse ornamentation.²⁹

According to Don Rowe, “Although the interval pattern between the five orders remained constant, they could be tuned in both unison and octave. (It should be noted that the five orders of the baroque guitar were tuned in the same tones as the first five strings of the modern guitar, although different tunings were also used). Generally, the first order was simple while the second and third were tuned in unison. The arrangement of the fourth and fifth was

²⁷ Puerta Zuloaga David: 1988. Retrieved: 09-16-15.
<http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/musica/tiple/indice.htm>

²⁸ Rodrigo, Fernando: Historia de la vihuela y la guitarra renacentista. Retrieved: 09-16-15. <http://www.laguitarra-blog.com/2011/11/23/historia-de-la-vihuela-y-guitarra-renacentista/>

²⁹ Navarro González, Julián: *La enseñanza de la guitarra barroca solista: Diseño de un instrumento para el análisis de su repertorio*, Tesis doctoral, Universidad de Barcelona, 2007.

variable. Unfortunately, very few composers specified which tuning was the most appropriate for their music.”³⁰

Some instruments were also heard in the Island since the sixteenth century, played by African servants and slaves during various festivities, such as the Kings' Day, in which they were allowed to participate. According to certain testimonies, those instruments were most likely cylindrical membranophones of a single patch, not consecrated, very similar to the drums of *bembé* and *yuka*; as well as other shaken idiophones, such as *marugas*, *rattles*, *güiros* and *jingle bells*.

Later, we hear about groups formed by guitars and bandolas in Santa Clara, to which flutes and fifes were added in Santiago de Cuba. The fife is a transverse treble flute with a natural tuning (without the addition of metallic keys), which was widely used in the army, in *fife and drum* groups as well as in the bands. Already in the first half of the eighteenth century, we receive information about a family from Santiago de Cuba whose members sang accompanied by the sound of the violin and the harp.

This small ensemble was expanded in the chamber orchestra used by Esteban Salas in the Cathedral of Santiago de Cuba, since 1764, where we find a modest vocal-instrumental group composed by three *tiples* (sopranos), two *altos* (contraltos), two *tenors*, two *bajones* (bassoons), two *violins*, a *violón* (cello), a *harp* and an *organ*, to which *flutes*, *oboes*, *French horns* and *violas* were added at a later time.

From 1793, the French immigrants of Saint Domingue, based in Santiago de Cuba, founded the first band in that city. They introduced the clavichord, and formed various instrumental groups composed of instruments such as: piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, trumpet, three french horns, three violins, viola, two cellos and percussion; or by one or two clarinets, two or three violins, two trumpets, double bass and bass drum, as well as smaller chamber groups consisting of a flute, a violin, a cello and a harp.

Finally, in the last years of the century we find mentions of musical groups that used to perform in the parties of Havana, and also about the presence in the same city of a new *forte-piano* imported from England, offered for sale by means of an ad printed in the newspaper *El Papel Periódico*.

³⁰ Rowe, Don and d'A Jensen, Richard: *Baroque Guitar for the Modern Performer. A Practical Compromise*. Guitar Review, #49, Fall 1981.

The sounds of the 19th century

Piano, Guitar and Violin

Since its arrival in Cuba at the end of the 18th century, the *forte-piano*, later known as *piano*, was established, next to the guitar, as one of the instruments preferred by the people. In addition to its use in dances and concerts, the instrument could soon be found in numerous family homes, where it was an essential complement to the education and development of the youngest, as well as a nucleus around which meetings and family parties were organized.

Alejo Carpentier recounts in his book *Music in Cuba* that: "On Thursday, February 12, 1801, *El Papel Periódico* had published the first concert program – for a true concert - that can be found in the old Cuban press... this concert program announced a: "Great vocal and instrumental concert - Don Jorge Eduardo Saliment is honored to announce to the public that on Saturday the 14th of the current [month] he will give a concert with a large orchestra in which the following pieces will be played:..."³¹, and later, in 1804 it was also announced in Havana "... a concert by Mr. Stamitz accompanied by a distinguished newcomer at the fortepiano ..." ³²

In 1819 the first *forte-piano* arrived in Santiago de Cuba, sent directly from Paris,³³ and in 1832, the renowned pianist Juan Federico Edelmann arrived in Havana and offered a concert in the Main Theater with great acceptance by the public. Stimulated by his success, Edelmann settled permanently in the capital city, and later opened a music house and a music publishing company to the public.³⁴ It was in that publishing house where the scores of the first native genres of Cuban music, *contradanza* and *guaracha*, were published.

Edelmann also dedicated himself to teaching the piano. Under his guidance, several renowned pianists and musicians were trained, such as Manuel Saumell Robredo (1818-1870), who although didn't attain great recognition as a performer, raised in his compositions the level of the Cuban *contradance*, from that of a simple popular dance to a true concert piece, destined to be performed in the most exclusive halls of Havana's high society.³⁵

During the 19th century, numerous pianists of national and international fame emerged in Cuba. Among them were Pablo Desvernine (1823-1910), Fernando Arizti (1828-1888) and his daughter Cecilia Arizti (1856-1930), as well as Angelina Sicouret (1880-1945) and Nicolás Ruiz Espadero (1832-1890).³⁶ Ruiz Espadero was also a professor of two other important artists,

³¹ Carpentier: 1979, p. 80.

³² Carpentier: 1979, p. 81.

³³ Sublette, 2004, p. 117.

³⁴ Carpentier: 1979, p. 142.

³⁵ Carpentier: 1979, p. 149.

³⁶ Orovio, Helio: *Cuban music from A to Z*. Tumi Music Ltd. Bath, U.K., 2004, p. 19.

Carlos Alfredo Peyrellade (1840-1908) and Ignacio Cervantes Kawanagh (1847-1905), whom for his career as an instrumentalist, composer and conductor, as well as for the enormous value of his musical compositions, is considered one of the most representative musicians of Cuba.³⁷

During the 19th century, the guitar continued to be the favorite instrument of popular music. The Cuban *guaracha*, as well as the romantic *songs* and the emergent *punto*, which was usually executed along with the *zapateo* in the rural areas of the country, was accompanied with the guitar and other cordophones of Hispanic origin such as the *tiple*, the *bandurria* and the Spanish *lute*.

Already at that time, the ever-changing guitar was not the small instrument with double strings of the Renaissance, but the romantic model, larger, louder, and with six simple strings.

At the end of the 18th century, in 1764, the Italian Luthier Antonio Vinaccia made in Naples what has been considered to be the first guitar with six simple strings; and already in 1780 a practical application of this functional transformation appeared in the work of Antonio Ballesteros "Work for Guitar of six orders ", which was followed by Fernando Ferandiere "Art of playing the Spanish guitar by Music", published in Madrid, in 1799.³⁸

During the nineteenth century, the fretboard was extended further down to the mouth of the guitar, increasing its tessitura. The luthier from Almería [Spain] Antonio de Torres (1817/1892) modernized the internal reinforcement system with fan-shaped wooden rods, through which he managed to increase the tone and volume of the sound for concerts in large auditoriums, and at the same time increased the size of the guitar and reduced the thickness of the sound board.³⁹

In Santiago de Cuba, Domingo and Bartolomé Tamé offered guitar, violin and singing lessons from 1819 to 1820. In the same city, Catalan teachers Manegat, Bisbé and Casamitjana taught guitar and singing between 1832 and 1836, and guitarists Francisco Peralta, Juan Antonio Betancourt, as well as Fabricio Calzado also acquired great reputation.

José Prudencio Mungol, a disciple of Dionisio Aguado, was the first Cuban guitarist trained in the Spanish guitar tradition. After his return to Cuba in 1893, when he offered a successful concert in Havana, Mungol actively participated in the musical activity of the capital city and was a professor at the Hubert De Blanck conservatory. Joaquín Inciarte from Santiago de Cuba and Fernando Costa de Camagüey were other renowned Cuban guitarists of the 19th century.⁴⁰

³⁷ Orovio, 2004, p. 49.

³⁸ Herrera, Francisco: *Pequeña historia de la guitarra*: http://www.guitarra.artepulsado.com/guitarra/historia_guitarra_herrera.htm. Retrieved: 11-01-15.

³⁹ Wikipedia. Historia de la Guitarra: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historia_de_la_guitarra. Retrieved: 10-03-15.

The bowed string instruments were always present on the Island, first in its modality of *viol* or *bowed vihuela* and later in the form of the Italian *violin*, which arises during the 16th century and already in the 17th century occupies an essential place in the European instrumental ensembles. As well as other instruments and culture in general, the violin also enjoyed a flowering period in Cuba during the nineteenth century, when we found them present in instrumental groups, of both concert and popular music.⁴¹

During that time, two virtuosos of the violin that reached world renown, stand out; The first is Claudio José Domingo Brindis de Salas Garrido, who began studying the instrument with his father Claudio Brindis de Salas, a well-known violinist and conductor, and later continued studies with professors José Redondo and José Van der Gutch. In 1863, Brindis de Salas appeared in public for the first time along with Van der Gutch and Ignacio Cervantes, and later came to be considered as one of the most important violinists of his time worldwide. The French government made him a member of the Legion of Honor and handed him a nobility title; and in Buenos Aires they gave him an authentic Stradivarius violin. In Germany he was appointed chamber musician of the Emperor and became a German citizen. In 1911, Brindis de Salas died of tuberculosis, pauper and abandoned, in the City of Buenos Aires.⁴²

Like Brindis de Salas, José White Lafitte began his musical training with his own father; and on March 21, 1854, he offered his first concert in Matanzas, where he was accompanied by the famous American composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk, who encouraged him to continue his studies in Paris and collected funds with the purpose of paying for his trip. He studied at the Paris Conservatory between 1855 and 1871, and subsequently served as director of the Royal Conservatory of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, where he also worked as a court musician for Emperor Pedro II. White later returned to Paris, where he lived until the end of his life.⁴³

We know from written testimonies that, since the end of the 18th century, both the European and the Cuban contradance, caused furor in the soirées and parties of Havana and Santiago de Cuba, as it appears in the following comment quoted by Ned Sublette:

"The following story told by Captain Alexander [in 1831] deserves to be cited, both for its characterization of the contradance, and also for its description of the gambling halls at that time [in Havana]: '... The ballroom was brightly lit, the ladies surrounding it as usual, and the men disposed in groups, or smoking freely in the corridors. At the beginning of the dance, the band, which was composed of nine instrumentalists, three violins, two cellos, oboes and French horns, could play in the most excellent and lively style a waltz, a fandango or a contradance, the last

⁴⁰ Giro, Radamés: 1986, p. 20-21.

⁴¹ Giro, Radamés: 1986, p. 23-24.

⁴² Orovio, Helio: 1981. P. 60.

⁴³ Ficher, Miguel: *Latin American Classical Composers*, Scarecrow Press, 1996, p. 373.

one a combination of waltz and quadrille; certainly, as for grace and elegance, the Havanese are unrivaled' ..."⁴⁴

We can also notice in the previous comment the structure of the instrumental group that played the dance music, which formed a small chamber orchestra where the string instruments were represented, as well as the woodwind family and also the brass.

Alejo Carpentier cites a fragment of the novel *Cecilia Valdés* by Cirilo Villaverde (1812-1894), where a musical ensemble of that time is mentioned [ca. 1839], comparing it with the groups that were later used in popular dances. According to Villaverde: "Those orchestras comprised by a fife, clarinet, three violins, double bass and a pair of timpani, as well as güiros and scrapers, were, with a cornet more or less, the same ones which are still heard in Cuba, on the village dances..."⁴⁵

Zolia Lapique mentions, in connection with the emergence of the song style called *habanera* (which was actually a sung Cuban contradance) a comment published in the newspaper *La Prensa* on February 17, 1843, which highlights the instrumental and vocal groups that performed the music: "The choristers of both sexes of the company will sing waltzes, dances and rigodones, with verses incorporated and to the rhythm of the orchestra; in the meantime the contestants will dance; as has happened in the splendid costume dances of the court of Madrid last year." And he also says: "The dances happened in 1843, as it appears in the following information of *La Prensa*: '... Many ladies, attached with pleasure and Elegance, danced the *Cuban danza* and the sweeping *wals* [sic.], to the sound of a complete orchestra, which played these two dances to the best of its ability. The choir accompanied the orchestra and sang verses pertaining to the bustling Carnival, cheerful and timely verses, forming a strange and pleasant ensemble for whom had never heard this blending of human and instrumental voices [...]"⁴⁶

Product of the development achieved by the lucrative trade of sugar, tobacco and coffee, as well as other economic lines such as the mining exploitation; already in the middle of the 19th century, Havana had become a great city that competed with the best in the Americas, and even with some in Europe. An Asturian emigrant, Antonio de las Barras, expressed the following opinion about the city of Havana at that time:

"I arrived in this capital city worried with the idea which all Spaniards come here; which is that this country is pending to be civilized, and it was no little surprise when I found a beautiful city that had us fifty years of advantage in all kinds of innovations " (...) And added, "In general, the public decoration is very well attended in Havana, its main streets and roads have been paved and the walks and gardens are carefully preserved. The unpaved streets, which are spoiled by the torrential rains and the great passage of the carriages, are becoming increasingly smaller. The

⁴⁴ Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 136.

⁴⁵ Carpentier: 1979, p. 112.

⁴⁶ Lapique, Zoila: 1998, p. 157. (Subrayados del autor).

foreigner who comes to this population does not miss in it anything that may constitute a civilized country. Good theater, that of Tacón, perhaps the best in America; good coffees such as Dominica, Escauriza and the Louvre. Restaurants, luxurious and elegant circuses such as Chiarini and Nixon, in which much of the year there are shows, dances, various exhibitions of wild animals, phenomena of nature and gigantic panoramas. In short, everything that an advanced people can demand in terms of entertainment and distraction is found in Havana with profusion, splendor and grandeur, in the four cool months of the year, that is, from November to February.⁴⁷

An unexpected visitor

In 1854, the American pianist and composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk arrived in Havana on a concert tour, accompanying the famous soprano Adelina Patti, which at that time was only fourteen years old. Gottschalk's visit to Cuba represented an important event for Cuban music, since the talented artist made great contributions to its evolution. Gottschalk used Afro-Cuban style elements in works with complex forms, such as the *Caprice on the theme of the Cocoyé*, as well as in an opera entitled *Fiesta campestre cubana*. Also in terms of the timbre aspect, Gottschalk brought innovative creations, such as the orchestral piece *Night in the Tropics*, from 1860, where he used Cuban percussion for the first time in a symphonic work, anticipating the *Ouverture on Cuban themes* by Amadeo Roldán in more than sixty-five years.

In 1869, Gottschalk described in the correspondence addressed to his sister an ambitious musical project that he planned to present at the Tacón Theater, using a huge orchestral ensemble, which denotes (even considering the possibility of some exaggeration by the author) the high level of the cultural life in Havana at that time. Gottschalk said about it: "Two months later (on the offer made to me by the general-in-chief to place at my disposal all the military bands) I had, as I say, the idea of giving a grand festival, and I made an arrangement with the director of the Italian company, then in possession of the Grand Tacón Theater. He contracted with me to furnish his chief performers, all the choruses, and his whole orchestra on condition of having an interest in the result. I set to work and composed, on some Spanish verses written for me by a Havanese poet, an opera in one act, entitled *Fête champêtre cubaine*. Then I composed a *Triumphal Hymn* and a *Grand March*. My orchestra consisted of six hundred and fifty performers, eighty-seven choristers, fifteen solo singers, fifty drums and eighty trumpets—that is to say, nearly nine hundred persons bellowing and blowing to see who could scream the loudest. The violins alone were seventy in number, contrabasses eleven, violoncellos eleven!"

The editor of the biographical notes of Gottschalk comments on this event as follows: "The festival took place on February 17, 1860. As early as January 7, the Gazette of Havana was announcing certain plans: Berlioz's manner of performing Rossini's *Moïse* at his first festival in Paris would be followed, i.e., the principal phrase sung successively by soprano, tenor and baritone would be sung by all the sopranos, all the tenors, and all the baritones of the Marezek

⁴⁷ De las Barras y Prado, Antonio: *Memorias. La Habana a mediados del siglo XIX*. Madrid, 1926.

Company, with members of chorus and orchestra joining in to make a thrilling crescendo. Although Moïse was not performed, this effect probably was used in some other work. A month later the newspaper reported that, in order to foil the speculators Gottschalk would sell tickets from his residence. The festival was definitely a success. In April and May, Gottschalk participated in various concerts. As for another large, successful concert at the Salon of the Louvre, the *Gaceta* declared that only Gottschalk could perform such a miracle at this time, adding that in his *Escenas campestres* he had conserved the character and poetry of the country that had inspired him.”⁴⁸

The Carnival in the 19th century

During the 19th century, the instruments of African origin continued to be confined in the barracks of the slaves and the societies called *Cabildos de nación*, and were only heard by the population during the festivities in which black and free slaves were allowed to go out into the streets with his Carnival troupes.

According to David H. Brown: “After 1792, when the councils were forcefully relegated to the area outside the walls, the Carnival processions left their locations and penetrated the entrances to the fortification that constituted the intramural area. They marched through the residential and commercial roads of Mercaderes, Obispo and O'Reilly streets towards the central Plaza de Armas, the site of the Palace of the Captain General of the Island. In the courtyard of the Palace, as well as in other stops along the way, the members of the processions danced, demanded and received gifts (monetary donations), and then returned to their homes.”⁴⁹

The following account from 1866 describes a Kings Day parade in Havana, where the author mentions the instruments that were performed by those who participated in the procession, as well as their characteristic sounds:

“Countless groups of black Africans *comparsas* travelled through all the streets of the capital city. The clatter is immense, its appearance horrifying ... The noise created by all the drums, the horns and the whistles stun the passersby everywhere; in one corner a Yoruba king surrounded by his phalanx of blacks, here a Gangá, and there another one from the Carabalí nation... all of them kings for a day, singing in a monotonous and unpleasant tone in their African languages.”⁵⁰

In numerous engravings from the painters Landaluze and Miahle, based on the Carnival festivities, we can see some instruments such as drums and horns, that used to be performed on these occasions. On the left, in a famous 1855 Miahle engraving called *Kings Day*, is a drummer

⁴⁸ Moreau Gottschalk, Louis: *Notes of a pianist*. Princeton University, 2006 , p. 26.

⁴⁹ Brown, David H.: 2003, p. 35

⁵⁰ Moore, Robin D.: 1997, p. 65.

playing astride a cylindrical drum and another man with a hat behind him, blowing a curved horn.

Punto and Zapateo

By 1836, Esteban Pichardo mentions the *zapateo* (or *zapateado*), one of the first genres of our popular music, in his well-known *Diccionario provincial casi razonado de voces y frases cubanas*, where he says about the Cuban peasant: “But where he heard the sound of a string, there he dragged his feet to the zapateo and sings his love affairs with the same impudence and enthusiasm if he would be participating in an informal gathering, in jail or on the road...”⁵¹

The *zapateo* and the *punto* were direct descendants from the song-dances with *verse-chorus* form and *hemíola* rhythm that arrived in Cuba from the Spanish metropolis, between the 16th and 18th centuries. In an engraving by Federico Miahle from 1855, entitled *El zapateado*, we can observe this dance style in a festive gathering (called *guateque* or *changüi*), which is typical of the Cuban peasant. We can also notice the musical accompaniment by a man singing on the left side of the picture, while he plays an instrument that could be a *guitar* or a *tiple*; and to the right, another man standing and keeping the rhythm while clapping his hands.

The *punto* and the *zapateo* were usually accompanied by a small, very heterogeneous and casual instrumental group, which originally included the *guitar* and other cordophones such as the *bandurria*, the *Spanish lute* (which at a later time became the *Cuban lute* with a different tuning), the *tiple* and the *güiro*.

The *tiple* was frequently mentioned by chroniclers and historians along with his faithful companion, the *güiro*, also called *gourd* or *guayo*, an idiophone of possible aboriginal origin.⁵² The *tiple* was a type of small guitar, which, as the name implies, had a treble tuning, and was part of a wide family of instruments of Iberian origin, such as the *Canary tiple*. The *tiples* or treble guitars were widely reproduced in the colonies, giving rise to numerous variants such as the *Puerto Rican tiple*, the *Brazilian cavaquinho*, the *Andean charango*, the *Venezuelan Cuatro* and the *Jarana jarocho* from Veracruz, Mexico. The use of the *tiple* was subsequently abandoned, and is no longer active in the Cuban music practice.

The sounds of *Danzón*

In the following story by the *costumbrista* writer Francisco de Paula Gelabert, published in 1881 (from which we reproduce a fragment), about the well-known Havanese character of the *mulata de rumbo*, several terms related to the musical practice in the capital city were mentioned, which provide valuable information about this subject.

⁵¹ Pichardo, Esteban: *Diccionario provincial casi razonado de voces y frases cubanas*. Editorial Ciencias Sociales, La Habana, 1976, p. 296.

⁵² Hernández e Izquierdo: 2010, p. 47

At the beginning of the story we find the term *rumba* or *rumbas*, which demonstrate its frequent use towards the end of the 19th century. Here, the word *rumba* or *rumbas* is utilized in its broadest sense, as a synonym of feast or party, and is not related to any specific musical genre.

Further on, there is a mention of the *danzón*, an important music genre derived from the ancient *Cuban danza*, which appears at an undetermined date during the second half of the nineteenth century; and whose authorship is attributed to the composer and conductor from Matanzas, Miguel Faílde. The piece *Las alturas de Simpson*, which was released on January 1, 1879 at the *Liceo de Matanzas*, is usually considered as the first *danzón*. Other dances that were apparently very popular at that time, such as Similiquitron, Oligamba and Yambú, are also mentioned in this story. Curiously, the last term, Yambú, coincides with the name of one of the genres of the popular *rumba de cajón*. In addition, other *danzones* are mentioned, among which we find the name of a famous *guaracha*, *La Guabina*, and *La niña bonita*, homonym of a *contradance* by Manuel Saumell. We should point out that the previous information suggests a great interaction between the different genres in vogue at that time.

The author also gives us information about the instruments that were used to perform those *danzones*, since the main character mentions that the pieces were going to be performed by a trio of *harp*, *violin* and *flute*, a small ensemble which is very similar to those mentioned by Ned Sublette in reference to the meetings held by the French immigrants in the coffee plantations of Santiago de Cuba, during the 18th century.⁵³

Francisco de Paula Gelabert states in his story: "... Leocadia was going to bed, as she had said, not less than at twelve noon, when one of his friends from the *rumbas* arrived at home, accompanied by another young man whom he was going to introduce to her.

He soon became familiar with the *mulata*, beginning of course, to court her. Naturally, the conversation derived to the subject of the *rumbitas* at *el Vedado*, and Leocadia proposed that next Sunday they should have a gathering at that place.

-Great idea, *prieta santa*! exclaimed Floro, his friend; "He goes with us", he added, pointing to Camilo, who was the previously introduced guest.

"We will dance a *danzón*," said Camilo, approaching the *mulata*. "*¡Quite, quite!* We have never entered into such abuse, pretty black boy: we should stop," she replied, rejecting him with affected coquetry, and using that unique vocabulary with which some young people are so familiar. "For the *danzones* there is no one better" observed Floro; when she dances the *Similiquitron*, she has a *bull* in the waist that throws fire and a *caidita de aronga*...

-The one I love most is *Oligamba*; do you remember, Floro, the last *rumba*?

-And where do you leave the *Yambú*...? This poor man has been *litera* for four years, traveling, like a stove, among relatives, and knows nothing about it...

... Here they came to tell the young man how much they had enjoyed these *rumbas* and explain him what they consisted of.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 9.

-You dance with harp, violin and flute, until you can't take no more, said Leocadia enthusiastically...

"Talking about something else, Juanilla," said after a brief pause Leocadia, "on Saturday I celebrate my birthday, and have a gathering and a dance here at home all day long, with harp, violin and flute, *de echa cocó pa la saranda*. So if you want to take part and spend some time in such a kind company, you know that I will be very happy..."

... So, the day of the *jaranita* arrived, meeting at Leocadia's house up to half a dozen *mulatas*, Floro, Camilo, a *negrito tabaquero*, cousin of the heroine of the party, whom she called *Tatica*, the well-known Juanilla and four or five more individuals, invited to the *guateque*, not counting the three colored musicians who played the aforementioned instruments...

The *danzones* followed closely each other, without truce and without rest, such as *La mulata Rosa*, *¿Dónde va Canelo?*, *Las Campanillitas*, *La Guabina*, *Las cuerdas de mi guitarra*, *La niña bonita*, *Apobanga* and all the others who are in vogue...⁵⁴

The orchestra founded by Miguel Faílde and his brothers in Matanzas, was a type of group which has been called *orquesta típica*, and was composed of a *cornet*, a *piston trombone*, a *figle* or *ophicleide*, two *clarinets in C*, two *violins*, a *double bass*, *timbales* (small *timpani*) and *güiro*.⁵⁵ This group is very similar to the one mentioned by Cirilo Villaverde in his novel *Cecilia Valdés*, where he says: "...Those orchestras comprised by a fife, clarinet, three violins, double bass and a pair of timpani, as well as güiros and scrapers, were, with a cornet more or less, the same ones which are still heard in Cuba, on the village dances..."⁵⁶

According to Helio Orovio, the format of the *orquesta típica* or wind orchestra appeared already in the eighteenth century and reached its greatest fame during the nineteenth century. These orchestras originally played *contradances* as well as other ballroom pieces, and were subsequently used to perform *danzas*. The *orquestas típicas* were replaced by the *French charangas*, although some of them that played in the *retretas* and parties in the countryside towns.

Since the mid-19th century, Cuban peasants had begun to include in their festivities some *rumbitas* of binary rhythm, similar to the *guarachas* that enjoyed great popularity in the cities, which contrasted with the typical ternary or ternary-binary tunes of their traditional repertoire.

Some of those tunes or *singsongs* of the peasants, which have been preserved by tradition to this day, such as the *Caringa*, *Papalote*, *Doña Joaquina*, *Anda Pepe* and

⁵⁴ Gelabert, Francisco de Paula, *La mulata de rumbo en Tipos y costumbre de la Isla de Cuba*, Editor: Miguel de villa, Habana, 1881, p. 33. <https://archive.org/details/tiposycostumbres00bach>

⁵⁵ Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 247

⁵⁶ Carpentier: 1979, p. 112.

Tingotalango, were called by musicologist Danilo Orozco *proto-sones*, *soncitos primigenios*, *rumbitas*, *nengones* or *marchitas*.⁵⁷

Over a long period of time, covering the second half of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century, new instruments were incorporated into those already traditionally used by peasant musicians, which were inserted into the original ensemble of *guitar*, *tiple* and *güiro*; those were the *bandurria*, the *Cuban lute*, the *claves*, and other instruments such as the *tumbandera*, the *marímbula*, the *botija*, the *bongoes*, the common *machete* and the *accordion*.⁵⁸

At the end of the 19th century, and particularly after the abolition of slavery in 1886, a large number of newly liberated slaves were integrated into the slums of Havana and Matanzas, as well as numerous Chinese and Spanish who had been hired to work in conditions of semi-slavery in rural areas, since the mid-nineteenth century.

In the households of those humble neighborhoods of Havana and Matanzas called *solares* or *carterías*, a fusion of races and cultural traditions took place between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, that resulted in the birth of a new urban genre called *rumba*. Like the Cuban *guaracha* and *contradance*, *rumba* was a mix of musical elements from Europe and Africa. This new musical genre was called *rumba de solar* or *rumba de cajón* (wooden box *rumba*), because the sound medium utilized in its beginning was a common wooden box.⁵⁹

The sounds of the 20th Century

The *Charanga Francesa*

According to Ned Sublette, in 1910 the piano became more important with the growing popularity of *French charangas* or *French orchestras*, which played *danzones* and "became one of the most significant sounds of Cuban music during the 19th century."

Ned Sublette also points out that this type of instrumental group must have been present in Cuba, in one way or another, since the first piano arrived on the Island at the end of the 18th century. The flutist José Fajardo thought that the *French charanga* had evolved from the *Haitian quintet*, and that other similar instrumental formats that existed in Haiti, where the ballroom dance orchestras (*ókés de bastringue*), were composed of cello, violin, double bass,

⁵⁷ Rodríguez Ruidíaz, Armando: El origen de la música cubana. Mitos y realidades, 2015, p. 51.
https://www.academia.edu/4832395/El_origen_de_la_m%C3%BAsica_cubana._Mitos_y_realidades

⁵⁸ Rodríguez Ruidíaz, Armando, 2015: 58.

⁵⁹ Rodríguez Ruidíaz, Armando, 2015: 59-61.

clarinet and/or trombone. In Martinique, *bastringue* (dance hall) orchestras included a piano, clarinet, trombone, percussion, cello and double bass.

The displacement of the *orquesta típica* by the *charangas* underwent a slow process of evolution, during which, both instrumental formats frequently exchanged elements and were called either as *charangas* or *orquestas típicas*; although the one that included a piano, was always called *French charanga*. It is commonly considered that the first *French charanga* founded in Havana was that of the pianist Antonio ("Papaíto") Torroella (1856 - 1934), which was already active in 1898.⁶⁰

The traditional format of the *French charanga* was a flute, two violins, piano, double bass, Cuban *timbal* and *güiro*. The *Cuban timbal*, also called *paila*, was a new indigenous instrument different from the European concave *timbal* (timpani) that were used in the *orquesta típica*. The *Cuban timbal* was a flat membranophone with a metallic body and a single patch, of a shallower cut than those of the tom-toms of the battery, which appeared at the end of the 19th century.

After 1866, the newly liberated slaves, as well as the workers from the inland of the country and some surrounding rural areas, took their styles of African *rumba* and their *rumbitas campesinas* to the capital city. It was in Havana that the musical styles that had been developing separately during the second half of the nineteenth century, the *rural rumba* and the *urban rumba*, finally met. In the slums of Havana, the *guaracheros* and *rumberos*, who accompanied themselves with the guitar and the *güiro*, met other *rumberos* who sang and danced to the sound of the wooden box and the *clave*; and the result of that encounter was a fusion of the two styles into a new genre that was to be called *son* at a later time.

The sounds of *Son*

The *troubadours* began arriving in Havana during the first decade of the 20th century.⁶¹ The *singers* (cantores), as they were initially called, were accompanied by the guitar and the *clave*. Their repertoire was composed of Cuban songs and the recently created *bolero*, and also by *guarachas* and *rumbas*.⁶² They arrived mainly from the East, where oral tradition places the origin of this musical movement, and belonged to the most diverse classes and social categories, from the refined and cultured Pepe Sánchez, tailor by profession, co-owner of copper mines and representative of a fabrics company based in Kingston, Jamaica,⁶³ to the humble and talented Sindo Garay.

⁶⁰ Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 307-308.

⁶¹ Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 297.

⁶² Rodríguez Ruidíaz, Armando: 2015, p. 85.
https://www.academia.edu/4832395/El_origen_de_la_m%C3%BAsica_cubana._Mitos_y_realidades

⁶³ Giro, Radamés: 1998, p. 275.

Those *troubadours* joined others who were already living in Havana, such as María Teresa Vera and Rafael Zequeira, to create a movement that would lead to a true transformation of Cuban music. They also collaborated with other musicians who were mainly dedicated to the cultivation of *rumba* and the incipient *son*, with the purpose of forming the first *son* groups in the capital city.⁶⁴

The instrumentation of the *son* groups became increasingly complex in order to satisfy the demands of the public and the American record companies, which were interested in recording and commercializing the musical productions of the *soneros*. This way, some duos and trios first emerged, such as those of María Teresa Vera and Rafael Zequeira, Floro and Zorrilla, Pablito and Luna and Zalazar and Oriche, as well as the *Matamoros trio*.

At a later time, some quartets were created, such as the *Cuarteto Oriental*,⁶⁵ composed by Ricardo Martínez, director and *tres*, Gerardo Martínez, voice and *claves*, Guillermo Castillo, *botijuela* and Felipe Neri Cabrera, *maracas*. According to Jesús Blanco, cited by Díaz Ayala, a few months after its foundation, the bongo player Joaquín Velazco was integrated into the group.⁶⁶

Already in the most advanced phase of the *son*'s evolutionary process, around 1920, the *Cuarteto Oriental* was restructured to become a sextet, took the name of *Sexteto Habanero*, and established the configuration of the *son* sextet, which since then was constituted by : *tres*, guitar, *bongo*, *claves*, *maracas* and double bass.⁶⁷ In 1927, Ignacio Piñero founded the *National Septet* (Septeto Nacional) (named like that because its members came from all over the nation)⁶⁸ as director and bassist, along with Abelardo Barroso, lead voice and *claves*, Juan de la Cruz, tenor, Bienvenido León, baritone and *maracas*, Alberto Villalón, guitar, Francisco Solares, *tres*, and “El Chino” Inciarte, *bongo*. Later, in 1929, they added a trumpeter named Lázaro Herrera.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Rodríguez Ruidíaz, Armando: 2015, p. 86.
https://www.academia.edu/4832395/El_origen_de_la_m%C3%BAsica_cubana._Mitos_y_realidades

⁶⁵ Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 335.

⁶⁶ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1994, p. 318.

⁶⁷ Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 336.

⁶⁸ Linares, María Teresa y Núñez, Faustino: *La música entre Cuba y España*, Fundación Autor 1998, p. 165.

⁶⁹ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: *Música cubana, del Areyto a la Nueva Trova*, Ediciones Universal, Miami Florida, 1993, p. 117.

Orchestras and bands in the 20th Century

The *Philharmonic Orchestra of Havana* was founded on March 14, 1924, thanks to the efforts of professors Antonio Mompó, César Pérez Sentenat, Pedro San Juan and Amadeo Roldán, with the support of Dr. Antonio González Beltrán, who integrated the initial directive of the *Philharmonic Orchestra of Havana Society*.

The orchestra was conducted by Maestro San Juan and after him by Amadeo Roldán, and was characterized by the aesthetic audacity of its programs that included contemporary and novel works by authors such as Charles Edward Ives, Arthur Honegger, Wallingford Riegger, Igor Stravinsky, Amadeo Roldán and Alejandro García Caturla. Concerts were also held in coordination with the Hispano-Cuban Institution of Culture chaired by Fernando Ortiz, the Nueva Música group, founded by Amadeo Roldán and Alejo Carpentier; and the Society of Contemporary Music, founded by María Muñoz de Quevedo.

From 1939 to 1953, the orchestra was conducted by maestro Massimo Freccia, former director of the Budapest Symphony Orchestra, with Manuel Duchesne Cuzán as an aggregate conductor. Other prominent guests who conducted the orchestra were: George Enescu, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Ethel Lagiska, Nicolás Slonimsky, Leopold Stokovsky, Carl Bamberger and Joaquín Turina.

The German director Erich Kleiber conducted for the first time the *Philharmonic Orchestra of Havana* on March 25, 1943, and remained as director of it until 1947, year in which Juan José Castro substituted him. He was followed by Arthur Rodzinski, and from 1956 the orchestra was conducted by maestro Alberto Bolet. In 1958, Igor Markevitch was appointed as conductor.

In addition to the aforementioned, the *Havana Philharmonic Orchestra* was conducted by renowned directors such as: Gonzalo Roig, José Echániz, Walter Taussig, Antal Dorati, Enrique González Mántici, Bruno Walter, Carlos Chávez, Hebert von Karajan, Serguei Koussevitzky, Ernest Ansermet, Igor Stravinsky, Eugene Ormandy and Heitor Villa-Lobos. The orchestra concluded its performances in 1959, when the *National Symphony Orchestra* was founded.⁷⁰

On March 3, 1934, the Catalan composer José Ardévol, María Isabel L. Rovirosa and Manuel Duchesne Morillas, joined together with the purpose of creating a group that was named the *Havana Chamber Orchestra*, whose first concert was held on April 8 that same year, with the following program: Suite No. 1 in C major, by Juan Sebastián Bach; Small nocturnal serenade, by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Symphony No. 73 (La Chasse), by Joseph Haydn.

The leaders of the Orchestra were committed to present in Cuba the most significant works of the universal, ancient and modern repertoire, and to perform the music of the new

⁷⁰ Ecured: *La Orquesta Filarmónica de La Habana*.

http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Orquesta_Filarm%C3%B3nica_de_La_Habana. Retrieved: 10-09-15.

Cuban composers. On July 8, 1934, they released *Tres toques*, by Amadeo Roldán; on September 9, the *First Cuban suite*, by Alejandro García Caturla, and *Nine small pieces, Concerto for piano, wind and percussion, Sonata for three horns and Three Concerti Grossi*, by José Ardévol.

During its period of activity, the *Havana Chamber Orchestra* premiered various works by Cuban composers, such as: *Concerto*, for wind instruments, and *Fugue*, by Edgardo Martín; *Serenata and Capriccio*, for four instruments, and *Quintet*, for wood and strings, by Gramatges; *Sonata de la Virgen del Cobre*, by Argeliers León; *Concertino en Re*, by Hilario González; *Sonata-trio and Quintet in D*, by Nilo Rodríguez; the full version of *Rítmicas*, for wind quintet and piano, by Amadeo Roldán; *The Capricho concertante*, by Julián Orbón; the *Septeto* by Natalio Galán, and a *Suite* by Juan Antonio Cámara.

They also performed works by composers such as: Giovanni Gabrielli, Arcangelo Corelli, Wallingford Riegger, Igor Stravinsky, Paul Hindemith, Serguei Prokofiev, Gian Francesco Malipiero, Juan Cristian and Carlos Felipe Manuel Bach, Alessandro Scarlatti, Pierluigi da Palestrina, Béla Bartók, Arthur Honegger, Alfredo Casella and Ottorino Respighi.

On July 20, 1942, the sonatas of a group of young Cuban composers, disciples of Ardévol, were presented. Those composers included: Gisela Hernández, Serafín Pro, Juan Antonio Cámara, Harold Gramatges, Virginia Fleites and Edgardo Martín, which, along with others that joined the group at a later time, integrated the *Grupo de renovación musical* (1942-1948). In 1945, Harold Gramatges was appointed deputy director of the *Havana Chamber Orchestra*.

The orchestra made its presentations in the theaters *Campoamor*, *Principal de la comedia*, *Lyceum* and *Auditorium*; and offered several popular concerts, organized by the Culture Department of the Ministry of Education. In 1952, the Orchestra presented its last concerts to the Havana public.⁷¹

In Cuba, there is a long tradition of Music Bands. Already in 1783, it is mentioned how the members of the military bands of Havana were sent to cover certain shows in the city of New Orleans, which at that time was subordinate to the Captaincy General of Havana;⁷² and in 1793, the French immigrants from Saint Domingue, based in Santiago de Cuba, created the first band of music in that city.⁷³ The *Municipal Band of Havana*, founded in 1899, was directed by Maestro Guillermo Tomás, and since its inception it offered public auditions in the capital city.

⁷¹ Ecured: *Orquesta de Cámara de La Habana*.

http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Orquesta_de_C%C3%A1mara_de_La_Habana. Retrieved: 12-12-15.

⁷² Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 107.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 13.

Subsequently, the Band was directed by Masters Gonzalo Roig and Manuel Duchesne Morillas. At the present time it is known as the *Banda Nacional de Concierto*.⁷⁴

The guitar and the piano in the 20th Century

During the 20th and the 21st centuries, the guitar and the piano continued to be the solo instruments preferred by the population and they reached an unprecedented degree of development. Clara Romero de Nicola (1888–1951), inaugurated the guitar department at the Municipal Conservatory of Havana in 1931, where she also taught the Cuban guitar folk style, and created the *Cuban Guitar Society* in 1949. She also founded the *Guitarra* magazine, with the purpose of promoting the Society's activities. Clara Romero was the teacher of numerous Cuban guitarists, including her own children Isaac and Clara (Cuqui) Nicola.

After studying with his mother at the Municipal Conservatory of Havana, Isaac Nicola Romero (1916–1997) continued his training in Paris with Maestro Emilio Pujol, a disciple of Francisco Tárrega. Upon returning to Cuba, Nicola became immersed in a period of great activity as an interpreter that ended in 1957, with a concert where he premiered the famous *Danza característica* of his disciple Leo Brouwer. During the 20th century, several guitarists emerged in Cuba that achieved great international recognition, such as José Rey de La Torre, Juan Antonio Mercadal, Leo Brouwer and most recently Joaquín Clerch.⁷⁵

Also on the piano, several international soloists stood out during that same period, such as: Ernesto Lecuona, Ivette Hernández and Jorge Luis Prats.⁷⁶

The Carnival in the 20th century

The Afro-Cuban music styles that had remained hidden for centuries in the slave barracks and the *cabildos de nación* (Afro-cuban societies) finally emerged at the beginning of the 20th century in two important generic manifestations, the *rumba de cajón* and the *Carnival troupes* (*comparsas de carnaval*). The *rumba de cajón* was located at its beginnings, in certain areas of Havana and Matanzas.

La *rumba de cajón* or *de solar* is the first Cuban musical product generated by the fusion of Hispanic and African style elements, which is performed only with instruments of

⁷⁴ Orovio, 2004, p. 107.

⁷⁵ Wikipedia: Guitarra Clásica en Cuba. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guitarra_Cl%C3%A1sica_en_Cuba. Retrieved 10-14-15.

⁷⁶ Wikipedia: El piano clásico en Cuba. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_piano_cl%C3%A1sico_en_Cuba. Retrieved 10-14-15.

African descent. Its structural characteristics fit perfectly with the *rumba prototype*,⁷⁷ since its form and language are predominantly from Hispanic origin, while its rhythm is characteristically Afro-Cuban; but in this specific case, the instruments through which this popular genre is interpreted are not the traditional Hispanic cordophones, but the African membranophones and idiophones that remained hidden from the public eye for hundreds of years.

Due to its humble and informal nature, and also probably to the fact that since the disappearance of the "Kings Day" *comparsas* (parades), at the end of the 19th century,⁷⁸ the use of drums of African origin was officially prohibited by the authorities in Havana;⁷⁹ this type of *rumba* was not executed with drums, but with wooden boxes. According to Argeliers León: "After the closet door panel, or the board division that limited the room, they (the drummers) utilized the wooden boxes in which salted cod was imported. Those boxes were made of hard wood and produced a very adequate sound [...] they were disassembled, scraped, reassembled and glued, so they had a perfect instrument to play..."⁸⁰

Originally, the *rumba* set was composed of three boxes, the smallest and therefore the one who had the highest pitch, called *quinto*, performed as a soloist improvising rhythmic figures that sometimes established a dialogue with the dancer. The second box was called *macho* (male) or *tres-dos* (three-two), because the essential rhythm played on it was based on the *Cuban clave*, which had a distribution of accents corresponding to five strokes, distributed in combinations of three-two or two-three. The largest box was called *hembra* (female) or *salidor*, because it was usually the one that started or *broke* (rompía) the *rumba*. The original wooden boxes were subsequently replaced by cylindrical drums with a convex barrel shape, made of wooden slats held by metal rings, called *tumbadoras* or *congas*, which were initially tuned by means of heat, and later with modern metal keys.⁸¹

We have already commented on the importance of the Carnival festivities in Cuba, and particularly that of the Epiphany or Three Kings Day, since these represented the only opportunity during which the population of the capital city and other cities in Cuba could hear the sound of the original drums, with which the Africans and their descendants interpreted the music inherited from their ancestors.

⁷⁷ Rodríguez Ruidíaz, Armando: 2015, p. 83.
https://www.academia.edu/4832395/El_origen_de_la_m%C3%BAsica_cubana._Mitos_y_realidades

⁷⁸ Moore, Robin D.: *Nationalizing blackness*. University of Pittsburgh Press. Pittsburgh. Pa., 1997, p. 66.

⁷⁹ Moore, Robin D.: 1997, p. 229.

⁸⁰ León, Argeliers: 1981, p. 141.

⁸¹ Linares, María Teresa y Núñez, Faustino: 1998, p. 278-279.

At the beginning of the war of independence, in 1895, the colonial authorities suspended all Carnival activities indefinitely, and that prohibition remained in effect until the conclusion of hostilities in the early 20th century.

The mayor of Havana, Carlos de La Torre, officially reinstated the Carnival festivities in 1902. The massive participation of the population of African origin in the war of independence, during the second half of the 19th century, resulted in a greater integration from Afro-Cubans to the activities of society in general, and caused their participation in the Carnival to be more extensive and numerous during the first years of the republic. For the first time, Cuban blacks were allowed to perform their music and dance, of strong African influence, together with white groups such as El Alacrán, Model T cars covered with flowers, and floats.⁸²

Since 1902, the municipal authorities began once again to strictly regulate the organization of Carnival processions, showing preference for ornate cars, floats, military bands, and the presentation of the Carnival King and Queen; to the detriment of the manifestations of Afro-Cuban origin such as the *comparsas* and *congas*.⁸³ By 1916, the suppression of the *comparsa* groups in Havana was almost total. Although those regulations applied only to the Havana urban area, opposition to the troupes in other parts of the country subsequently led President Machado to sign other legislation, at a national level, that prohibited not only the Carnival shows and activities, but also the performances of *rumba de cajón*.⁸⁴

Because during the period between 1900 and 1910, Carnival shows had attracted thousands of foreign visitors to the capital city every spring, finally in 1937, after a long debate, the city authorities decided to reauthorize the *comparsas* at the Carnival parades.⁸⁵

Already in 1937, the troupes began to permanently participate in the Havana Carnivals, parading through the Paseo del Prado with their distinctive choreographies, dances and songs. Those groups included *El Alacrán*, from the Cerro neighborhood, *Los Marqueses* from Atarés, *Las Boyeras* from Los Sitios, *Los Dandys* from Belén, *La Sultana* from Colón, *Las Jardineras* from Jesús María, *Las Componedoras de bateas* from Cayo Hueso, *El Príncipe del Raj de Marte*, *Las mexicanas* from Dragones, *Los moros azules* from Guanabacoa, El Barracón from Pueblo Nuevo and *Los Guaracheros* from Regla.

Held in July, the Carnivals of Santiago de Cuba and other eastern towns showed their own characteristics. Instead of being reduced to certain streets and squares as in the capital city

⁸² Moore, Robin D.: 1997, p. 67-68.

⁸³ Moore, Robin D.: 1997, p. 69.

⁸⁴ Moore, Robin D.: 1997, p. 71-72.

⁸⁵ Moore, Robin D.: 1997, p. 83.

city, the Santiago groups paraded throughout the city and the population participated more actively in them. The style and character of their music and dance were also different.⁸⁶

Shortly after 1959, the revolutionary authorities announced that the Carnivals would no longer be held in February and March, but on July 26 (a celebration of the Revolutionary government). In principle they made this change not to interrupt the sugar cane harvest in 1979, but they kept this ordinance in place at a later time, in order to celebrate the “triumph of socialism”. Isolated representations were made between 1990 and 1995, which were linked to political events. These included some groups that took to the streets in November 1993, to celebrate the anniversary of the CDR (Revolutionary surveillance committees). Finally, in an attempt to incentive tourism, the government reauthorized a modest Carnival activity preceding the celebration of Lent, instead of in July as previously.⁸⁷

Due to their casual and improvised nature, the instrumental ensembles of the Cuban Carnival tended to be very varied and changing; but it is still possible to determine certain standards regarding the instrumental groups of Havana and Santiago de Cuba, which differ significantly.

Argeliers León describes the basic instrumental format of the Havana ensemble as follows: “... In other areas of the population there were instrumental groups such as the *comparsas*, composed of a *conga*, a *tumbadora* and a *quinto*, a snare drum (without the resonance strings), a double cowbell or *jimagua*, a bass drum or two frying pans nailed in on a box or a board. This group could be expanded with other *tumbadoras* and one or more trumpets.⁸⁸ Which is equivalent to saying that the group was composed of several membranophones (*tumbadoras* and drums), several percussive metallic idiophones (cowbells and frying pans), as well as one or several trumpets, and sometimes also several trombones.

The drum called *conga* or *tumbadora*, which according to its name comes from a *Bantú* origin is, as Fernando Ortiz points out in *The instruments of Afro-Cuban music*, quoted by Helio Orovio: “... a drum of African origin, made of wooden slats and iron rings, about a meter long, barrel-shaped, and open at one end with a single patch of ox leather pinned to the body of the drum.” It was formerly tuned by heat, but now is currently adjusted with metallic screws.⁸⁹

The diameter of the *tumbadoras*, which is directly related to their tuning, is as follows (from the highest to the lowest pitches: *requinto* (9 to 10 inches in diameter), *quinto* (10 to 11

⁸⁶ Orovio, Helio: 2004, p. 45.

⁸⁷ Moore, Robin D.: 1997, p. 85.

⁸⁸ León, Argeliers: *Del canto y del tiempo*. Editorial Pueblo y Educación. La Habana, Cuba, 1981, p. 29.

⁸⁹ Orovio, Helio: *Cuban music from A to Z*. Tumi Music Ltd. Bath, U.K., 2004, p. 57.

inches), *conga* (*macho* or *tres-dos*) (11 to 12 inches), *tumbadoras* (or *hembras*) (12 to 13 inches), *retumbadora* (or *mambisa*) (14 inches).⁹⁰

According to Argeliers León: "... In Santiago de Cuba the *comparsas* were accompanied by several *bocuses* (Large drums with straight staves, conical shape and nailed leather patches), plow wheels, iron hoops or discs, or either they used other flattened drums as bass drums of different diameters (called *galletas*). The Chinese *cornetica* that characterizes these Santiago groups was always present."⁹¹

According to another description, several bimembranophone drums executed with a drumstick were used in the Santiago *comparsas* and *congas*: a *requinto*, three *congas* (without any relation to the *tumbadora* or Havana *conga*), which are subdivided into two *redoblantes* or *galletas*, and a *pilón*. Several membranophonic drums are also used called *bocuses* (which are conical with a single patch touched with the palms of the hands). The drums are complemented by three metallic idiophones (made from discarded drum brakes), which are selected according to their loudness.

The wind instruments are represented by the incisive sound of the *Chinese cornetica*, a double-reed instrument that was inserted in the Santiago *congas* around 1915,⁹² and that always makes the initial call to start dancing (*arrollando*), which is how the dance style of the *conga* is called. This style is characterized by a peculiar form of rhythmic march, dragging the feet and moving the hips and shoulders to the beat of the music.⁹³

In reference to the Carnival festivities it is important to clarify the meaning of some terms that are usually used indiscriminately or create some confusion. These are: *paseo* (promenade), *comparsa* (parade) and *conga* (Afro-cuban dance). *Paseo* is a word used to designate the promenade or procession through a predetermined route that was followed by musicians, dancing groups, certain decorated or non-decorated vehicles, and the general public participating in those festivities. The *comparsa* (parade) is a choreographed dance activity, accompanied by music and singing, which was usually organized by the residents of a specific neighborhood or area within the city. Finally, the *conga* is a musical and dance activity that is coordinated by a group of people, to which others spontaneously join as they travel through a route that can be predetermined or unexpected.

⁹⁰ Wikipedia. *Conga (instrumento musical)*, https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conga_%28instrumento_musical%29. Retrieved – 10-15-15.

⁹¹ León, Argeliers: *Del canto y del tiempo*. Editorial Pueblo y Educación. La Habana, Cuba, 1981, p. 222.

⁹² Pérez Fernández, Rolando: *The Chinese community and the corneta china: Two divergent paths in Cuba*, Yearbook 20014, p. 79.

⁹³ Ecured: *Conga Santiaguera*. http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Conga_Santiaguera. Retrieved: 10-02-15

In the same way that their instrumental formats differ, also the musical style of the Havana *conga* (conga habanera) is different from that of the Santiago *conga* (conga santiaguera), and perhaps the most defining element between both styles is a peculiar rhythmic accent within the four-by-four (4/4) beat, which is executed in the Havana's *tumbadora* or in the *conga* (drum) of Santiago, respectively.

In the case of the Havana style, this accent falls on a syncopated note in the third beat of the measure, setting up a rhythmic pattern widely promoted by its use in an onomatopoeic style, in famous *salon congas* of the late thirties and early forties, such as: *Bim Bam Bum* by Rafael Hernández and *Uno dos y tres* by Rafael Ortiz, which later became popular in English as: One, two, three, Kick!⁹⁴

Unlike the style of the Havana *conga*, the on-beats of the measure are stressed in the *Santiago conga*, thus inducing a powerful sensation of frontal impulse, which encourages the compulsive movement of the feet along with the rhythmic pulsation. In this case, the accent of the drum is produced between the fourth time and the first of the next measure, thus adding an additional energy wave to each new percussion cycle, which extends in an indefinite sequence throughout the entire path of the *comparsa*.



Fig. 28 – Havana conga. Reduced transcription of some essential elements.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Torres, George: *Encyclopedia of Latin American Music*.
https://books.google.com/books?id=MX5BXxjwV9cC&pg=PA106&lpg=PA106&dq=Desi+Arnaz+un+dos+conga&source=bl&ots=jTwJOiaMlm&sig=XkDK7FeiWGDmHe5ZY88_BvvPEm4&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CCYQ6AEwAmoVChMI8uHd0f_AyAIVyCYeCh2HWg3t#v=onepage&q=Desi%20Arnaz%20un%20dos%20conga&f=false.
 Retrieved: 10-13-15.

⁹⁵ Transcription by the author.

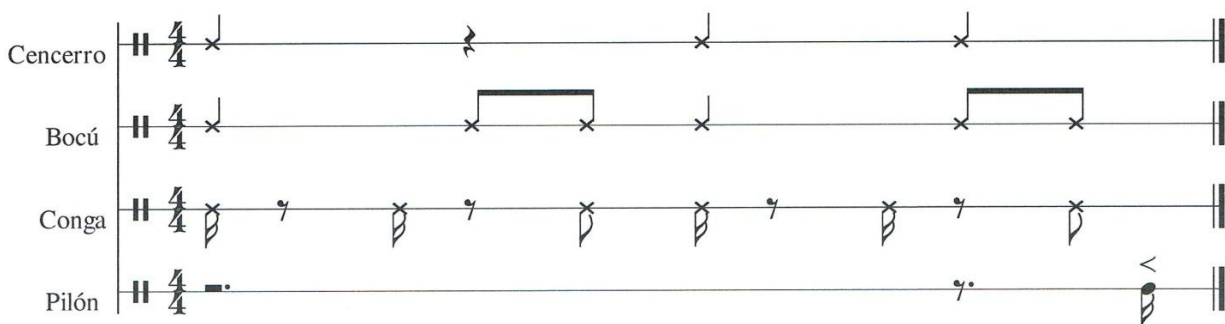


Fig. 29 – *Santiago conga*. Reduced transcription of some essential elements.⁹⁶

Jazz Band with a Cuban flavor

During the thirties decade of the 20th century, the popularity of American music and the attractive instrumentation of its orchestral formats profoundly impacted the musical activity in Cuba, where the ensembles began to adapt the jazz band's format to their functional and stylistic needs. That way, in addition to having an ideal vehicle for interpreting popular North American genres, such as Foxtrot and Charleston,⁹⁷ the orchestras could also play Spanish *pasodobles* and all Cuban genres, with the exception of *danzón*, which required other timbral qualities for their performance.

The initial format of the jazz band groups was composed of three distinct sections, one composed of brass instruments (two trumpets and a trombone), one of reed instruments (three saxophones)⁹⁸ and the so-called rhythmic section (banjo and/or guitar, piano, double bass and drums).

The *Hermanos Castro Orchestra*, founded in Havana in 1929, by saxophonist Manolo Castro, was the first to utilize the format of the jazz band in Cuba. The orchestra was composed of a trumpet, a trombone, an alto saxophone and a tenor saxophone, a violin, piano and drums; and it was later expanded with the inclusion of three trumpets, a trombone, two alto saxophones and two tenors; In addition to a piano, drums and three singers.⁹⁹

Another of the first groups based on the jazz band format that had great success in the United States and Europe, was the *Havana Casino Orchestra* conducted by Justo Angel Aspiazu,

⁹⁶ Transcripción by the author.

⁹⁷ Linares, María Teresa y Núñez, Faustino: 1998, p. 168.

⁹⁸ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1993, p. 157.

⁹⁹ Ecured: *Orquesta Hermanos Castro*. http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Orquesta_Hermanos_Castro. Retrieved, 10-10-15.

better known by the nickname of Don Aspiazu. Founded in 1930, the Aspiazu orchestra originally had a trumpet, a guitar, piano, double bass, *claves*, *maracas* and *timbales*.¹⁰⁰ At a later time, this format was extended to two trumpets, three saxophones that were exchanged with clarinets, two violins, piano, guitar and / or banjo, drums, *claves*, *maracas* and bongo.¹⁰¹

Some important jazz band orchestras of the thirties were: Armando Romeu Orchestra (1930-1933), with four trumpets, a trombone, four saxophones, guitar, piano, double bass and drums;¹⁰² the Lebatard Brothers Orchestra (1930), with two trumpets, three saxophones / *muta*¹⁰³ in clarinet, two violins, piano, double bass and drums; La Orquesta Casino de La Playa, (1936) with two trumpets, a trombone, four saxophones, piano, double bass, *claves*, *maracas* and bongo;¹⁰⁴ the Lecuona Cuban Boys, which will later be called Havana Cuban Boys, with four saxophones / *muta* in clarinets, three trumpets, double bass, drums and *tumbadoras*; In addition to the Palau Brothers Orchestra, the Julio Cueva Orchestra and the Cosmopolitan Orchestra.

Evolution of the *French Charanga*

The *French charanga* format, more specialized in the danzón and other genres of Cuban popular music, continued to be utilized during the 20th century. Among other orchestras of this type we can mention that of Antonio María Romeu, founded in 1910, which incorporated the following instruments: piano, violin, flute, double bass, Cuban timbales and güiro;¹⁰⁵ as well as those of Cheo Belén Puig, Belisario López, and Neno González.¹⁰⁶

Antonio Arcaño was born in Havana in 1911 and studied with Armando Romeu, with whom he learned to play the cornet and the clarinet. At a later time he studied the flute with his cousin José Antonio Díaz. In 1937 he founded his own orchestra called *Arcaño y sus maravillas*, a very appropriate title, since Arcaño took pride in counting, as it appeared in its advertising slogan, with a star on each instrument. The first orchestra of 1937 had a staff comprised of: Antonio Arcaño (flute), Elizardo Arocha (violin), Raúl Valdés (violin), Israel Cachao López

¹⁰⁰ Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 395-396.

¹⁰¹ Según una foto de la época.

¹⁰² Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 425.

¹⁰³ Muta – In music: an indication to change the tuning or instrument while playing a piece.

¹⁰⁴ Information based on a video from the 1940s.

¹⁰⁵ Wikipedia: *Antoio María Romeu*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_Mar%C3%ADA_Romeu. Retrieved: 10-10-15.

¹⁰⁶ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1993, p. 158.

(double bass), Jesús López (piano), Ulpiano Díaz (*timbales*) and Oscar Pelegrín (*güiro*). In 1944 the orchestra began to perform on the radio and changed its format to: flute (Antonio Arcaño), Elio Valdés, Salvador Muñoz, Fausto Muñoz, Félix Reina and Enrique Jorrín (violins), Miguel Valdés (viola), Juan Pérez and Juan Rodríguez (cello), Israel Cachao López (double bass), Jesús López (piano), Ulpiano Díaz (Cuban *timbal*), Julio Pedroso (*güiro*) and Eliseo Martínez (*tumbadoras*).

Arcaño turned his musical group into a small chamber orchestra with the addition of more violins, violas and a cello, and introduced a characteristic element of the *rumba de solar*, the *tumbadoras* or *congas*, which would add one more detail to the fusion process of European and African elements in Cuban popular music.

According to Dora Ileana Torres, citing Arcaño: “In 1940, Orestes López [brother of Jesús and Israel Cachao López] came up with the inclusion, in the last section of one of his *danzones*, of a *montuno* in the style of those who had already been played by the orchestra, writing the fundamental parts according to its conception, and thus this *danzón*, whose title was *Mambo*, gave its name to what we had already been doing for a long time. Then I named this style *new rhythm* (*nuevo ritmo*).” (from an interview with Antonio Arcaño in 1982).¹⁰⁷ This style, called *danzón of new rhythm* (*danzón de nuevo ritmo*), was associated at a later time in one way or another, to the well-known genres called *Mambo* and *Chachachá*.

We can see how the instrumental formats that interpreted the *danzón* in its beginnings, were evolving from the wind orchestra or *orquesta típica* to the *French charanga*, which gradually incorporated certain instruments that modified its timbre; such as the cowbell (in combination with the Cuban *timbales*) incorporated by the *Calixto Allende Orchestra* and the *tumbadoras* of the Arcaño orchestra, giving to the group a more Afro-Cuban flavor.¹⁰⁸

The forties ensembles

A modality of instrumental format that was derived from the *son septet* was the so-called *conjuntos*, which emerged in the early forties. In this regard, María Teresa Linares tells us: “... At the dawn of World War II, the (*son*) *septet* declined much more. Its sonority was not potent enough to pervade the halls full with hundreds of people. The incorporation of doubled instruments gave way to other combinations that extended the *septet*, which was then given the name of *conjunto*...”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Torres, Dora Ileana: *Del danzón cantado al Chachachá* en: Giro, Radamés: *Panorama de la música popular cubana*. Editorial Letras Cubanas, La Habana, Cuba, 1998, p. 178.

¹⁰⁸ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1993, p. 192.

¹⁰⁹ Linares, María Teresa y Núñez, Faustino: 1998, p. 171.

The Trio Matamoros had already added a piano, *tres*, another guitar, more voices and even a *Chinese trompetica* to its traditional format; for that reason, according to María Teresa Linares, this expanded septet was called *conjunto*.¹¹⁰ In its original version, the *conjunto* was formed by two or three trumpets, piano, double bass, bongo, *tumbadoras* and two or three singers, who also usually played guitar, *claves*, *maracas* and *güiro*.

According to Cristóbal Díaz Ayala, the *Sonora Matancera* was the oldest of those groups.¹¹¹ The original nucleus of the orchestra, called *Tuna Liberal*, was founded in Matanzas, in 1924, and was composed of a trumpet, *tres*, guitarra, *tumbadora*, double bass, *Cuban timbal* and vocals. He later changed his name to *Septeto Soprano*, and in the thirties he added a piano to his instrumental format.

In 1944, the famous trumpeter Pedro Knight became part of the group, thus reinforcing the brass section, and by 1948 the orchestra reached its permanent structure, which consisted of two trumpets, piano, double bass, *timbalitos*, bongo, cowbell, *tumbadoras* and three singers who also played guitar, *maracas* and *claves*.¹¹²

Around 1933, the brothers José and Manolo Saldarino founded the *Sexteto Miquito* in Havana. That group, called *sexteto*, even though it already included the piano, changed its name on May 1, 1937 to *Septeto Casino*, becoming the official group of the *Summer Casino* or *Gran Casino Nacional de Marianao*, in Havana.¹¹³ The *Septeto Casino* was named *Conjunto Casino* already in the forties,¹¹⁴ and consisted of two trumpets, piano, double bass, bongo, cowbell and *tumbadoras*.

The *Conjunto Casino*, which showed a strong influence of jazz, and more specifically of *swing* and *bebop* harmonies in its style, was considered one of the most advanced among the ensembles of its kind. Together with the *Sonora Matancera*, most related to the *guaracha* and the *rumba*, and the *Conjunto de Arsenio Rodríguez*, representative of the Afro-Cuban style, the *Conjunto Casino* established an archetype to which many groups later adhered, such as the *Conjunto Colonial*, the *Conjunto de Senén Suárez*, the *Conjunto de Ernesto Grenet*, the *Kubakán* and *Conjunto Rumbavana*, among others.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Linares, María Teresa y Núñez, Faustino: 1998, p. 172.

¹¹¹ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1993, p. 171.

¹¹² Wikipwdia: *Sonora Matancera*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonora_Matancera. Retrieved: 10-14-15.

¹¹³ Wikipwdia: *Conjunto Casino*. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conjunto_Casino. Retrieved: 10-14-15.

¹¹⁴ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1993, p. 172.

¹¹⁵ Wikipedia: *Conjunto Casino*. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conjunto_Casino. Retrieved: 10-14-15.

Arsenio Rodríguez was born in Güira de Macurijes, in 1911, and was known as "the marvelous blind man" for having lost his sight at the age of thirteen. He began to play *tres* in his teens and in 1930 he arrived in Havana, where he joined groups such as the *Sexteto Boston* and *Sexteto Bellamar*. Around 1940, he created his own ensemble which acquired great fame, mainly for its participation in the *Jardines de La Tropical* balls. In the late fifties, he traveled to New York with the purpose of consulting an ophthalmologist, and although his trip did not yield the expected result it served to present his ensemble to the American public, who welcomed him warmly. Later, Arsenio was replaced as director of the ensemble by his main trumpeter, Felix Chapottin, who changed the name of the group to *Conjunto Chapottin*.¹¹⁶

According to Radamés Giro, Arsenio Rodríguez created a different style of playing the *tres*, which differed from that of the *sextetos* and *septetos* of *son*. In his arrangements, the piano played a counterpoint with the *tres*, and at the same time introduced chords, arpeggios and rhythmic figurations (*tumbaos*) of great vitality and originality. Rodríguez also gave a prominent character to the contribution of the trumpeter Chapottin, who improvised passages in the style of the American *swing*, but always retaining an intrinsic Cuban flavor. Giro also says that Arsenio Rodríguez introduced changes in the style of the *son*, which established a school and led to an evolution that lasts until today.¹¹⁷ Díaz Ayala concludes by stating that Arsenio Rodríguez exerted a decisive influence on American musicians of Latin origin, which led to the revival of the *son* in the sixties and seventies, according to him: "... *Salsa* was already in Arsenio's legacy."¹¹⁸ The *Conjunto de Arsenio Rodríguez* was originally composed of: two trumpets, *tres*, guitar, piano, double bass, *claves*, bongos and *tumbadoras*.¹¹⁹

In a photo of 1951 the group appeared with the following formation: Félix Chapottin, Florecita and Armando Armenteros (trumpets), Arsenio Rodríguez (*tres*), Lili Martínez (piano), Lázaro Prieto (double bass), René Scull (solo voice and *maracas*), Miguelito Cuní (solo voice and *claves*), Carlos Ramírez (second voice and guitar), Chocolate Alfonso and Kiki Rodríguez (*tumbadoras*) and Antolín Suárez Papa Kila (bongo).

The fifties

The pianist and arranger Dámaso Pérez Prado (1927), from Matanzas, moved to Havana in the early forties and began acting in cabarets such as the *Pennsylvania* and the *Kursaal*, as well as in the orchestra of Paulina Alvarez. At a later time he made arrangements for various groups and was finally hired by the *Casino de La Playa Orchestra*. In 1949, he traveled

¹¹⁶ Orovio, 2004, p. 181.

¹¹⁷ Giro, Radamés: 1998, p. 206-207.

¹¹⁸ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1993, p. 174.

¹¹⁹ Sublette, Ned: 2004, p. 479.

to Mexico looking for better job opportunities and achieved great success with a new style, to which he designated a commercial name that had previously been used by Arcaño, which was *Mambo*.¹²⁰

Pérez Prado's style differed from the *Mambo's* previous generic concept. The new style showed a greater influence of the American jazz orchestras, and an expanded instrumentation that included four or five trumpets, four or five saxophones, double bass, drum set, maracas, cowbell, bongo and *tumbadoras*.

Pérez Prado proved to have outstanding talent, great originality and a lot of ability to market the new musical product. His style included a spicy counterpoint between the trumpets and saxophones, which drove the body to move at the beat of the rhythm, stirred at the end of each section by a loud characteristic guttural expression (aaaaaaah!).

Possibly because his music was mostly dedicated to an audience that lived outside the borders of the Cuban nation, the *Mambo* of Pérez Prado usually included a large number of international, and particularly American, elements of style. This characteristic becomes evident in his arrangements of songs such as *Mambo Rock*, *Patricia* and *Tequila*, where he utilizes the rhythm of American *swing*, that shows a ternary subdivision, merged with elements of *rumba* or Cuban *son*. In his number entitled *A la Billy May*, we can clearly hear the trumpets playing the melody in a *swing* rhythm over a typical binary accompaniment of *son*, characterized by the well-known rhythm of the *martillo* performed by the bongo. Pérez Prado's repertoire included numerous international pieces, such as: *Cerezo Rosa*, *María Bonita*, *Tea for two*, *La Bikina*, *Cuando calienta el sol*, *Malagueña* and *En un Pueblito Español*, among many others.

Already in the sixties, the group of Pérez Prado was composed of three or four trumpets, one or two trombones, three or four saxophones, electric keyboard, bass, drums, bongo and *tumbadoras*.

A new genre, the *Chachachá*

While Dámaso Pérez Prado triumphed in Mexico, another new genre, related to the original *Mambo* of Arcaño, was brewing in Havana. Its creator, Enrique Jorrín, was born in the town of Candelaria in 1929, studied music at the *Municipal Conservatory of Havana* and participated as a violinist in the *Orchestra of the National Institute of Music*, directed by Enrique González Mantiñi. Later he joined the *Hermanos Contreras Orchestra*, the *America Orchestra* and finally *Arcaño y sus maravillas*.

Jorrín has been traditionally attributed with the fatherhood of the new genre called *Chachachá*. In this regard, Jorrín himself tells us: "I composed some *danzones* in which

¹²⁰ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1993, p. 194.

musicians could sing short choruses, and since I noticed that this feature pleased the audience, I continued to develop it [...] In 1948, I changed the style of a Mexican song by Guty Cárdenas, called *Nunca*, leaving the first section as it was, and providing the second part with a different rhythm under the melody. That caused such a sensation that I decided to compose music based just on the last section - the third trio or *montuno* - regardless of the *danzón* style. And then I composed *La engañadora*.¹²¹

La engañadora, a danceable song composed in 1948 and released in 1952, was cataloged by its author as a *mambo-rumba*, but at a later time, in its number called *Silver Star* which begins as a *danzón*, a chorus is repeated at the end that says: "Chachachá, chachachá, is a dance like no other"; already mentioning the new generic name, which probably was inspired by the onomatopoeic interpretation of the characteristic rhythm performed by the *güiro*, or perhaps by its repetition in the dance steps.¹²²

In 1955, Jorrín founded his own orchestra with the traditional format of the *charanga*, that is, a flute, two violins, piano, double bass, timbales, *tumbadoras*, *güiro* and two singers; which was later modified with a cello, two trumpets, keyboard and electric bass, as well as a glockenspiel.¹²³

Between 1948 and 1950, a young Cuban singer named Bartolomé Maximiliano Moré, better known as Beny, was hired by Dámaso Pérez Prado to participate in his newly created orchestra. Beny Moré had arrived in Mexico a while before with the Miguel Matamoros' group, and along with Pérez Prado he presented himself as a singer, made numerous recordings, and even acted in films, thus contributing to the group's success. Moré returned to Cuba to work with Mariano Mercerón, but soon he traveled back to Mexico where he developed a successful career as a vocal soloist. Beny Moré returned to Cuba in 1953 and joined the Bebo Valdés orchestra, but a short time later he founded his own group, which he called the *Banda Gigante de Beny Moré's* (Beny More's Big Band).¹²⁴

The success of the *Banda Gigante* was immediate, and between 1956 and 1957, the orchestra toured Venezuela, Jamaica, Haiti, Colombia, Panama, Mexico and the United States, where he performed at the *Oscar's Awards ceremony*. In Havana, the group performed in the best ballrooms and mainly in *La Tropical* and *La Sierra*. Beny Moré passed away in 1963, with just forty-four years of age, and is considered one of the most important Cuban musicians of all time.

¹²¹ Orovio, Helio: 1981. P. 60.

¹²² Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1993, p. 221.

¹²³ Orovio, Helio: 1981. P. 117; y Youtube: *Orquesta Enrique Jorrín – El Túnel*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar-CN7W8JOg>. Retrieved – 10-19-15.

¹²⁴ Orovio, Helio: 1981. P. 143.

The *Banda Gigante* of Beny Moré was structured like a big jazz band, expanded with Cuban percussion. The orchestra included four trumpets, a trombone, five saxophones, piano, double bass, Cuban *timbales*, bongo / muta cowbell, *tumbadoras* and three singers who also played *güiro*, *maracas* and *claves*. According to Díaz Ayala, more trombones were subsequently added to the orchestra, and since then a more relevant role was given to that instrument in Cuban popular music.¹²⁵

At the end of the fifties, the musical landscape in Cuba could not be more promising since, in addition to numerous soloists who triumphed with their varied styles on the stages of the nation, there were also many orchestras and groups of the highest quality. Cristóbal Díaz Ayala provides us with a partial list of those instrumental groups, which we reproduce below:

Jazz band format orchestras – Riverside, Hermanos Castro, Hermanos Lebatard, Mariano Mercerón, Chapín-Chovén, Eddie Lester, Julio Cueva, Cosmopolita, Casino de La Playa, Beny Moré and Havana Casino.

Charangas – América, Orquesta de Enrique Jorrín, Aragón, Fajardo y sus Estrellas, Sensación, Sublime, Melodías del Cuarenta, Neno González, Almendra, Arcaño y sus Maravillas, Cheo Belén Puig, Belisario López and Antonio María Romeu.

Conjuntos – Casino, Sonora Matancera, Nelo Sosa, Roberto Faz, Jóvenes del Cayo, Kubavana, Saratoga, Arsenio Rodríguez, Chapottín and Estrellas de Chocolate.

Special groups – Los violines de Pego.

Trios – Servando Díaz, Los Rigual, Nodarse, Luisito Plá, Bimbi y su Trío Oriental, Los Guaracheros de Tropicana (Los Guaracheros de Oriente), América, La Rosa, Mario Recio, Taicuba, Pinareño y Hermanas Vázquez.

Groups (Combos) – Llopiz-Dulzaidez (Los Armónicos de Felipe Dulzaidez).¹²⁶

Cuban Rock

After 1955, the strong influence of American music in Cuba's youngsters resulted in the emergence of many soloists and *rock and roll* groups (also known simply as *rock*) in Cuba. The launch of *Los Llopis* quartet represented the arrival to a new stage of Cuban popular music, which was that of the generation and amplification of sound through electronic resources; since

¹²⁵ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1993, p. 230.

¹²⁶ Díaz Ayala, Cristóbal: 1993, p. 260.

in the structure of *Los Llopis* we find a novel element of great importance, the inclusion of an electrophonic guitar.

The *Los Llopis* quartet was composed of two electrophonic guitars, one traditional that was played upright like an acoustic guitar, and another, called *Hawaiian* or *lap slide* guitar, which was placed horizontally over the legs and executed with a metal bar with the purpose to produce glissandos or glides between the notes with great ease; The group also utilized an accordion and a saxophone.

Los Llopis' repertoire consisted of a combination of North American and classic *rock* pieces such as Bill Haley's *See you later alligator* and *Rock around the clock*, mixed with other Cuban and Latin American pieces, such as *Goza mi guaracha*, *Maquinolander* and *La pollera colorá*. *Los Llopis* were also very successful in Spain, where they settled for a few years and introduced a new Cuban rhythm with influence of the Dominican *merengue*, called *pachanga*.¹²⁷

No one could imagine during the night of December 31, 1958, what would happen at dawn the following day. On January 1, 1959, the troops of the *Segundo Frente Nacional del Escambray* commanded by Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo, arrived in Havana, thus bringing an end to the armed insurrection led by Fidel Castro Ruz, which had begun in 1953 with the attack on the *Cuartel Moncada* in Santiago de Cuba. That event determined the beginning of a radical transformation in all aspects of Cuban nationality, which has not yet concluded.¹²⁸

The sixties

Also in 1959, Luis Bravo, better known by the affectionate nickname of Luisito, entered the Cuban musical scene driving the young girls, or *pepillas*, crazy with themes such as *Oh Carol* by Neil Sedaka and *Tiernamente*, a Spanish version of *Surrender* (*Torna a Surriento*) by Elvis Presley; thus selling 500,000 45 RPM records in 1961.

Luisito Bravo was followed by other soloists such as Rogelio Sanzarini and Jorge Bauer, as well as groups that played *rock* in the style of the Bill Haley's band, such as *Los Satélites* by Antonio M. Romeu and the Tony Taño's band. The North American group *Bill Halley and His Comets* was composed of a saxophone, three electric guitars (lead, rhythm and lap slide), a double bass and drums (drum set). Other *rock* singers also appeared in 1961, such as Dany Puga, called the king of *twist*, and bands such as the *Diablos Melódicos* and the *Enfermos del Rock*, as well as *Los Halcones* and *Los Huracanes* from the city of Marianao.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Wikipedia: *Rock en Cuba*. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_en_Cuba. Retrieved: 10-20-15.

¹²⁸ Wikipedia: *Revolución cubana*. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revoluci%C3%B3n_cubana#La_Revoluci.C3.B3n_en_el_poder. Consultdo: 10-24-15.

¹²⁹ Wikipedia: *Rock en Cuba*. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_en_Cuba. Retrieved: 10-21-15.

Los Zafiros vocal quartet was another group from the early sixties that used the electric guitar as a background. Founded in 1961, and obviously influenced by the *Doo-Wop* style of *The Platters*, *The Diamonds* and other North American groups, it had a repertoire composed mainly of ballads, calypsos and bossa-novas, as well as songs with a slow *swing* rhythm and *boleros*. One of the defining characteristics of the group's style was the high pitch voice of the countertenor Ignacio Elejalde, supported by Miguel Cancio, Leoncio Morúa and Eduardo Elio Hernández (El Chino), as well as the famous guitarist Manuel Galbán, who served as musical director.

Also the guitarist Franco Laganá, an Italian musician who participated in the renowned group of Renato Carosone, was an early exponent of the electrophonic sounds in Cuba during the early sixties.¹³⁰

The ephemeral, but very popular rock group *Los Astros*, directed by charismatic singer and guitarist Raúl Gómez, soon succumbed to the increasing pressures exerted by the Fidel Castro regime on *rock* groups, which were considered at that time as a form of ideological diversionism, and persecuted in all its manifestations. His style, strongly influenced by the *British Invasion* groups, such as the *Beatles* and the *Rolling Stones*, was officially declared as deviant and consequently repressed without consideration. From that moment on, the so-called revolutionary government of Cuba progressively implemented an absolute control over all aspects of Cuban society, including culture of course.

Los Astros followed the classic format coined by the British groups: Raúl Gómez, lead voice and rhythm guitar, his cousin Luis Gómez, second voice and lead guitar, Marcelo as third voice and saxophone, and Gerardo López in the drums. His repertoire was made up of songs from the American *hit parade* of the sixties.

The group had to face numerous adversities and a frankly hostile environment during its short existence. *Eres como el fuego*, its first number on a radio station in the capital city, was recorded with great technical difficulties and therefore its result was of very poor auditory quality.

According to Jorge Luis González Suárez: "...The place where they settled for the longest time was the "Olokkú" Club [sic.], Located on Calzada street, corner to E, in El Vedado, where there is a restaurant of the same name today. There, their fans attended faithfully every day, as that was one of the few opportunities to see them live, and enjoy those wonderful banned melodies of the foreign 'enemy country'."

Los Astros played in a night program of musical varieties on *Radio Rebelde*, which was broadcast from a small studio located in the basement of a building on Calle O, between 23 and 25, La Rampa, where a large group of young people gathered since very early to get an

¹³⁰ Wikipedia: *Rock en Cuba*. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_en_Cuba. Retrieved: 10-21-15.

admission ticket. The group also played in some cinemas where a musical show was offered in addition to the programmed film; and also in the radio program *Buenas Tardes Juventud*, of the *Radio Marianao* station. According to González Suárez: "... Those shows also suffered an official ban, because they were considered a form of ideological diversionism."¹³¹

In 1963, a group emerged that received great support by the government and the official media, as an alternative to the music with foreign influence, the *Conjunto de Pello el Afrokán*. This group, which was actually an expanded typical ensemble of *Havana Carnival* music, consisted of four trumpets, three trombones, four solo *tumbadoras* played by *Pello el Afrokán*, eight percussionists, each of them playing one *tumbadora*; and two more percussionists playing two *tumbadoras*; as well as three cowbells, two *sartenes*, three singers, and several dancers.

Its founder, Pedro Izquierdo Padrón, known by the artistic name of *Pello el Afrokán*, was a native of Havana. Since childhood, he began to participate in groups of *rumba*, and in 1963 he introduced a new rhythm with the picturesque name of *Mozambique*. That style, which was nothing more than a modification of the Havana street *conga*, was very successful at its beginning; and as we mentioned earlier, it was decidedly supported by the Socialist Cuban regime as an "authentic" musical product emerged from the popular masses.

During the sixties, *Pello el Afrokán* and his group went on concert tours through Central and South America, as well as in Spain, France, Belgium, Poland, Germany, the former Soviet Union and Japan. *Afrokán* had the opportunity to play alongside world-famous figures such as the percussionist Mongo Santamaría, at the Olympia Theater in Paris.

Pello el Afrokán and his orchestra never went far from being a momentary curiosity. Their fame did not survive the sixties, perhaps because of the great limitations of its style, and also because of the extreme difficulty to reproduce the sound of their arrangements in other instrumental formats.¹³²

By 1965, the *Revolutionary* government implemented a strategy to replace the foreign cultural products that the young generations preferred, with others that were more suitable within its official guidelines; and as a result of that strategy, on August 6, 1966, a new radio program called *Nocturno* was launched. Its initial musical theme was the well known piece *La chica de la Valija*, performed by the Italian saxophonist Fausto Papetti. That program featured modern songs, giving priority to the European repertoire in Spanish of singers and groups such as: Los Mustang, Los Bravos, Los Brincos, Juan y Junior, Rita Pavone, Massiel, Nino Bravo, Leonardo Fabio, Salvatore Adamo and Rafael, as well as some Cuban groups like Los Zafiros and Los Dan.¹³³

¹³¹ Primavera digital: *Los que no pueden faltar. Los Astros de Raúl Gómez*. Jorge Luis González Suárez. <http://primaveradigital.net/los-que-no-pueden-faltar-los-astros-de-raul-gomez/>. Retrieved: 10-30-15.

¹³² Ecured: *Pello el Afrokán*. http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Pello_el_Afrok%C3%A1n. Retrieved: 10-21-15.

¹³³ Nocturno: <http://radionocturno.com/>. Retrieved: 10-21-15.

The *Communist Party* and its youth section, the *Juventud Comunista*, in coordination with the National Council of Culture, encouraged the formation of a group that included the most select Cuban Jazz musicians; and that project crystallized in the creation of the *Orquesta cubana de música moderna*, in 1967. The orchestra was organized by famous trumpeter Luis Escalante, and by composer, orchestrator and saxophonist Armando Romeu, who was its first conductor. At a later time, Romeu was replaced by Rafael Somavilla, who in turn was replaced by the great saxophonist Paquito de Rivera. The orchestra was also conducted by Tony Taño and Germán Piferrer.

In the words of Leonardo Acosta: “The Cuban Orchestra of Modern Music interpreted fundamentally not only jazz, but also “ Latin jazz ”, jazz-rock and sometimes certain symphonic (or rhapsodic) jazz in the line of the progressive jazz of Stan Kenton or the *Third Stream* by Günter Schuller during the 1960s”¹³⁴ The orchestra debuted on April 12, 1967, at the Amadeo Roldán Theater (former Auditorium). Its original format included six trumpets, four trombones, five saxophones, electric guitar, piano, bass, drums, Cuban percussion and *tumbadoras*.

The *Orquesta cubana de música moderna* functioned as a quarry that provided the human material for the creation of other important groups of its time, such as the Quintet of Chucho Valdés, and later the *Irakere Ensemble*. Its staff included renowned professionals such as Chucho Valdés (piano), Carlos Emilio Morales (guitar), Paquito D’Rivera and Carlos Averhoff (saxophone), Luis and Pucho Escalante (trumpet and trombone respectively), Juan Pablo Torres (trombone) and Arturo Sandoval (trumpet), among many others.

Also in the mid-sixties, the regime supported new *rock* ensembles which no longer played the music of the already banned English and North American groups, but the most acceptable versions (for the official ideology of the government) of certain Spanish groups that were famous at that time. Among those *combos* (from the English word *combination*) were *Los Dan*, which was composed of three electric guitars, electric bass and drums; *Los Kent*; *Los Dada*, where well-known singers and composers Mike Porcel and Pedro Luis Ferrer participated; *Los Barba* and *Los Bucaneros*, with a group of stars that included Pablo Milanés, Raúl Gómez, Ernesto Pérez and Reinaldo Alvear.¹³⁵

Within the sixties Cuban music panorama, we cannot fail to mention the work of the Cuban composer Juan Blanco, a pioneer of electro-acoustic music in Cuba and Hispano-America. Juan Blanco composed his first piece created entirely with electronic devices in 1961,¹³⁶ which was titled *Music for Dance*; and it was not until 1969 that another Cuban

¹³⁴ Acosta, Leonardo: *Raíces del jazz latino*. Un siglo de jazz en Cuba. Barranquilla, Editorial La Iguana Ciega, 2001.

¹³⁵ Wikipedia: Rock en Cuba. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_en_Cuba. Retrieved: 10-21-15.

¹³⁶ Orovio, Helio. Cuban music from A to Z. Tumi Music Ltd. Bath, UK. 2004. P.29.

composer, Sergio Fernández Barroso, dedicated himself to the composition of this type of works.¹³⁷

In 1970, Juan Blanco was appointed as a music advisor in the Propaganda Department of the ICAP (*Instituto cubano de amistad con los pueblos*), and in the performance of that function he composed electro-acoustic music for all audiovisual materials produced by that organization. After nine years, Juan Blanco finally obtained the necessary funding for the implementation of a *music recording studio*,¹³⁸ and a few months later he created the *ICAP Electro-acoustic Music Workshop*, where he himself provided training to the participants. In 1990, the workshop changed its name to the *National Laboratory of Electro-acoustic Music* (LNME).

After 1970, some Cuban composers such as Leo Brouwer, Jesús Ortega, Carlos Fariñas and Sergio Vitier, began to create electro-acoustic works, and already in the eighties, a group of composers that included Edesio Alejandro, Fernando (Archi) Rodríguez Alpízar, Marietta Véulens, Mirtha de la Torre, Miguel Bonachea and Julio Roloff, began receiving instruction and working on the ICAP study. Other Cuban composers who have used electro-acoustic technology are Argeliers León, Juan Piñera, Roberto Valera, José Loyola, Ileana Pérez Velázquez, José Antonio Pérez Puentes, Aurelio de La Vega, Tania León, Orlando Jacinto García and Armando Rodríguez Ruidíaz, among others.¹³⁹

The seventies

Another project of assimilation and integration of problematic artists into the *Socialist* system was that of the ICAIC *Sound Experimentation Group*, created at the end of 1969. For the implementation of this project, the Cuban government utilized the services of Alfredo Guevara, Director of the *Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry* (ICAIC). Guevara had a reputation for maneuvering in the extreme limits of governmental tolerance, based on the impunity granted by his personal friendship with Fidel Castro, as well as his absolute fidelity to the revolutionary process.

In this case, the strategic objective was the most prominent members of the movement called *Nueva Trova*, such as Silvio Rodríguez, Pablo Milanés and Noel Nicola. That group of

¹³⁷ Wikipedia: Música Electroacústica en Cuba. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%BAsica_de_Cuba#cite_note-Neil-37. Retrieved: 10-24-15.

¹³⁸ Leonard, Neil: *Juan Blanco: Cuba's Pioneer of Electro-acoustic Music*. III.http://finearts.uvic.ca/icmc2001/info/Leonard_blanco.php3.

¹³⁹ Wikipedia: Música Electroacústica en Cuba. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%BAsica_de_Cuba#cite_note-Neil-37. Retrieved: 10-24-15.

talented young people had begun to create songs with great influence from the composers and singers of the *American protest song* movement in the sixties, such as Bob Dylan and Joan Báez. For that reason, they were considered as potentially dangerous for a system that did not admit any criticism; and they finally had to surrender to the harsh reality that in Cuba it was only possible to protest against the *Yankee imperialism*, and never against the sad reality prevailing on the Island.

At that time, Pablo Milanés was interned for some time in a forced labor camp identified by the name of *UMAP* (Military Units for Production Aid), where young people considered to be in conflict with the *Revolution*, because of their religious ideas or their deviant sexual orientation, were confined and forced to work under extremely adverse conditions. Silvio Rodríguez was also enlisted in a ship of the *Cuban Fishing Fleet*, in a re-educational effort similar to the one established by the *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, so that he could experience in his own flesh the hard tasks of the proletariat, as a cure for his contestant ideological deviations.

Leo Brouwer, who is currently considered one of the most outstanding Cuban composers and performers of the 20th and 21st century, was chosen as Director of the ICAIC group. For his enthusiastic adherence to the avant-garde trends in vogue, and for his well-known taste for the most refined products of capitalism, Brouwer had experienced more than one conflict with the official *National Council of Culture*. The organization of that group of young creators under the sponsorship of Alfredo Guevara, prevented any possible intent of rebellion from their part against the regime's guidelines, while at the same time putting their creative potential at the service of the *Revolution's* ideological propaganda.

The group was initially integrated by Leo Brouwer, Silvio Rodríguez, Pablo Milanés, Noel Nicola, Eduardo Ramos, Sergio Vitier and Leonardo Acosta; and at a later time, Emiliano Salvador, Pablo Menéndez, Sara González and Amaury Pérez also joined the group.

In the beginning, the *Sound Experimentation Group* only included guitarists, but later they began to incorporate other instruments. Eduardo Ramos established himself as a bassist, and after that other musicians joined the ensemble, such as Leonardo Acosta with the saxophone, the flugelhorn and recorder flutes; the eminent pianist Emiliano Salvador; drummer Leoginaldo Pimentel; flutist Genaro Caturra, clarinetist Lucas de la Guardia, and Pablo Menéndez with the electric guitar. Many other musicians became part of the Group sporadically or collaborated in various recordings.

An element of great importance with respect to the activity of this group was the studies of acoustics, electro-acoustics and recording techniques, which were carried out in relation to the activities and recordings of the *Sound Experimentation Group* by the sound engineers of the ICAIC, and especially by technician Jerónimo Labrada; which laid the foundations for the future sound design of advanced groups such as *Irakere*.

After the departure of Leo Brouwer as director, as well as other members, such as Leonardo Acosta, Carlos Averhoff, Leoginaldo Pimentel, Silvio Rodríguez, Noel Nicola and Sergio Vitier; the group was restructured under the direction of Eduardo Ramos, and on that

occasion it included Pablo Milanés and Sara González in the voices, as well as the pianist Emiliano Salvador, the saxophonist Manuel Varela, the guitarist Pablo Menéndez, the drummer Ignacio Berroa and the percussionist Norberto Carrillo. That new version of the group remained active until 1976.¹⁴⁰

The *charanga* is modernized

Also at the end of 1969, the young bassist and composer Juan Formell departed from the *charanga* of Elio Revé, which he had integrated until that moment, and created his own orchestra, which was called *Van Van*, in accordance with the revolutionary slogan in vogue (*de que van, van*), related to a promotional campaign launched by the regime in reference to the so-called *Zafra de los diez millones* of 1970, an ambitious revolutionary project destined to reach the production of ten million tons of sugar cane, which like most projects of the Revolution never came to fruition. The propagandist orientation of the name *Van Van* clearly indicated the intention of its creator, to opportunistically navigate along with the ideological tendencies promoted by the State, so that he could take advantage of the vital support from government institutions.

With his new orchestra, Formell implemented certain innovations that he had already begun to experiment with the *Revé Orchestra*, such as the insertion of the electrophonic bass, guitar and keyboard (and at a later time the trombones), in the format of the traditional *charanga*; as well as the replacement of the five-key flute with that of the classic Böhm system. He also made innovations with respect to the assembly of the voices, with a treatment similar to that of the vocal quartets, instead of the predominant unison style of the traditional *charangas*; and finally, he assigned more rhythmic than melodic figurations to the strings.

In addition to the changes in instrumentation, Formell also included essential modifications in the formal structure of the arrangements, transforming the basic rhythmic cells and assigning specific figurations to the keyboard and bass, as well as to the drums, whose function was extended with the inclusion of novel components. In the sound of the *Van Van*, Juan Formell managed to incorporate the original prototype of *son*, as well as elements of North American *rock* and *jazz*, to create a new style that was known as *Songo*.¹⁴¹ According to Kevin Moore: "Those harmonies, never before heard in Cuban music, were clearly incorporated from American pop music, and shattered the harmonic limitations to which Cuban popular music had faithfully adhered for so long."¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Ecured: Grupo de experimentación sonora del ICAIC. http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Grupo_de_Experimentaci%C3%B3n_Sonora_del_ICAIC. Retrieved: 10-22-15.

¹⁴¹ Ecured: *Los Van Van*. http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Los_Van_Van. Retrieved: 10-24-15.

¹⁴² Moore, Kevin: *The Roots of Timba, Part II: Juan Formell y Los Van Van*. *Timba.com*. Web, 2011. http://www.timba.com/encyclopedia_pages/juan-formell-y-los-van-van. Retrieved - 10-17-15.

In a video from the seventies, the original structure of the group is shown, which was composed by a flute, three violins, cello, piano, leading guitar, rhythm guitar and electric bass, drums, *güiro* and *tumbadora*.¹⁴³ Already in 1984, we can see that the ensemble had expanded with three trombones, in addition to the flute, two violins, electric keyboard and bass, drums, *güiro*, Cuban *timbales* and three *tumbadoras*.¹⁴⁴

The new Jazz Band

The *Irakere* ensemble, one of the most significant instrumental groups in the history of Cuban music, was founded in 1973 by a stellar group of Cuban musicians, among which were Arturo Sandoval (first trumpet), Jorge Varona (second trumpet), Paquito D'Rivera (first saxophone), Carlos Averhoff (second saxophone), Carlos Emilio Morales (guitar), Chucho Valdés (piano), Carlos del Puerto (bass), Enrique Plá (drums), Oscar Valdés (singer and percussion), as well as Jorge "El Niño" Alfonso and Armando Cuervo (percussion).¹⁴⁵

In that instrumental group numerous stylistic influences converged, that were represented by the most autochthonous elements of the *rumba* and the Afro-Cuban ritual music, as well as by multiple characteristics of the new trends in North American jazz. Also in *Irakere* culminated a process of decantation that had begun years before in the *Orquesta cubana de música moderna*, which served as a training venue for a select group of the most talented Cuban popular musicians, who before joining the group were part of other jazz quartets and quintets.

The sonority of *Irakere* was already representative of a new era, because it was based on the most sophisticated electro-acoustic techniques; whereby the sound of all the instruments is captured by microphones that lead to a *mixer* or mixing device, where the level of each channel is balanced with respect to the others. The final result is sent to various amplifiers, which are distributed according to the acoustic conditions of the sound space.

In 1977, *Irakere* participated in two Jazz festivals within the area of the Socialist countries, the *Belgrade Jazz Festival* and the *Warsaw Jazz Jamboree*, and that same year, several jazz figures, among which were the famous Dizzie Gillespie, Stan Getz and Earl Jones, traveled to Havana and participated in a meeting with several members of the group. In 1978, *Irakere* participated in the *Newport Festival* in New York and *Montreux* in Switzerland with such

¹⁴³ Youtube: *Nostalgia Cubana – Los Van Van – Bola de humo* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JtPcgYFUSI>. Retrieved: 10-24-15.

¹⁴⁴ Youtube: *Los Van Van de Cuba, 1984 - Será Que Se Acabo – Live. Juntos a las 9*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NK2ER7YugtU>. Retrieved: 10-24-15.

¹⁴⁵ Acosta, Leonardo (2003: 211). *Cubano be, cubano bop: one hundred years of jazz in Cuba*. Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Books. ISBN 158834147X.

success that Columbia Records produced an album with recordings made at both festivals. The LP was titled *Irakere*, and was published by CBS Records and EGREM.

Already at the peak of his fame, during 1979, *Irakere* received a *Grammy Award* for the best Latin music recording in the United States, and the following year one of the pillars of the group, the saxophonist Paquito de Rivera, defected and established his permanent residence in North America.

Salsa

At the end of the sixties, Dominican flutist Johnny Pacheco and businessman Jerry Masucci launched a group of Latin artists in New York under the commercial name of *Fania*, with the purpose of promoting a musical style they called *Salsa*, that was nothing more than a version of the *son* style that Cuban ensembles and orchestras interpreted during the forties and fifties. By 1973, that style had evolved into a more modern sound, and Johnny Pacheco organized a group he called *Fania All Stars*.¹⁴⁶ In 1979, the orchestra traveled to Havana in order to participate in a festival called *Havana Jam*, in which famous artists such as Rita Coolidge, Kris Kristofferson, *The Weather Report* group and Billy Joel participated, along with Cuban orchestras such as *Irakere*, *Pacho Alonso*, *Tata Güines* and *Aragón*.¹⁴⁷

In the mid-1980s, *Salsa* finally arrived in Cuba; and according to Kevin Moore: “The *Salsa* star Oscar D’Leon tour in 1983 is prominently mentioned by every Cuban I have interviewed on this matter. The album *Siembra* de Rubén Blades was heard throughout the Island in the mid-eighties and has been quoted extensively in the *guías* and *coros* of the orchestras, from Mayito Rivera de los *Van Van* (which quotes Blades *Plastic* in his *guías* of the 1997 classic *Llévala a a tu vacilón*), to the *Médico de la salsa* (citing another *Plastic* hook - 'you can see it in their face, you can see it in their face, never in their heart' - in their final masterpiece before leaving Cuba, *Dios sabe*).”¹⁴⁸

Before the Oscar D’Leon concert, Cuban musicians had generally rejected *Salsa* since they considered it a bad imitation of Cuban music, which had evolved far beyond the old patterns used in it; but the momentary popularity of *Salsa* brought back to the forefront some of those old patterns, such as the combined use of the cowbell of the *paila* with that of the bongos. That rhythmic pattern became one of the most outstanding features of the *Timba*, which emerged in Cuba in the late eighties.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Wikipedia: Salsa music. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salsa_music. Retrieved: 10-25-15.

¹⁴⁷ Wikipedia: Fania All-Stars - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fania_All-Stars. Retrieved: 10-25-15.

¹⁴⁸ Moore, Kevin: *Beyond Salsa Piano* v. 11. César “Pupy” Pedrosó: *The Music of Los Van Van, Part 2*. Santa Cruz, CA: Moore Music/Timba.com, 2011, ISBN 1460965426.

¹⁴⁹ Wikipedia: Salsa music. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salsa_music. Retrieved: 10-25-15.

The sounds of Cuba in Miami

In 1975, a group of young Cubans met in Miami, a city considered the capital of Cuban exile in the United States, with the purpose of creating a group called *Miami Latin Boys*, which was led by Emilio Estefan. Later, in 1976, the band changed its name to *Miami Sound Machine*, and its members were Emilio Estefan (accordion and director), Marcos Avila (bass), Enrique "Kike" García (drums) and Gloria Estefan, Emilio's wife (vocalist).¹⁵⁰

Already in 1977, the group began recording with the *Audiofon* Records in Miami, Florida, and at that time it was integrated by Emilio Estefan (accordion and percussion), Gloria Estefan (voice and percussion), Mercy Murciano (main voice), Raul Murciano (keyboards), Marcos Avila (Bass) and Enrique "Kike" García (drums). In 1979 they incorporated the American guitarist Wesley Wright and the Cuban trumpeter Fernando García, and towards the end of that year they signed a contract with CBS International and produced several albums. *Miami Sound Machine* expanded its brass section in 1980 with the inclusion of trumpeters Fernando García and Víctor "Papito" López, as well as trombone player Louis Pérez, and in 1984, a Dutch DJ began playing his song *Dr. Beat* in Amsterdam. Unexpectedly, the song reached first place in the ranking of the United Kingdom and most of Continental Europe. This is how the North American markets finally realized the enormous potential of the group.

During the 1980s, a series of events turned the city of Miami in a focal point for the international community. The famous movie *Scarface* directed by Martin Scorsese, where Hollywood Star Al Pacino played the role of a Cuban exile who becomes a prominent character in the North American underworld; the television program *Miami Vice* with its latest fashion images; the models of the international *haute couture* posing in Ocean Drive; and the revitalization of Miami Beach with its characteristic Art Deco style, were part of a new trend that was projected to the world as the brand image of Miami; and the *Miami Sound Machine* ensemble was the musical background that defined the new style.

The *Primitive Love* album, released by the group in 1985, contained three numbers that reached a prominent place on the Billboard Hot 100 list. One of them, called *Conga*, unleashed a real *craze* in the United States and around the world. Its success could only be compared to the popularity reached by the *Salon Conga* in the United States and Europe during the thirties, or to the *conga* lines popularized by Desi Arnaz in the fifties.¹⁵¹

As we can see in a promotional video of that famous song, at that time, *Miami Sound Machine* was composed of a trumpet, a flugelhorn, a saxophone, guitar, keyboard and electronic bass, *Cuban tres*, bongo, *tumbadoras*, as well as a *Cuban timbal* with a cowbell and a suspended cymbal.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Orovio, 2004, p. 49.

¹⁵¹ Wikipedia: *Miami Sound Machine*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miami_Sound_Machine. Retrieved: 10-25-15.

¹⁵² Wikipedia: *Miami Sound Machine*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miami_Sound_Machine. Retrieved: 10-25-15.

The *Son* is reborn in Cuba

The classical sonority of the *son* that emerged to the public light in Havana at the beginning of the 20th century, was reborn again in that same city towards the end of the seventies decade; and that resurgence came through the creative activity of Juan de Marcos González, who with a group of young students from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering of the *Ciudad Universitaria José Antonio Echeverría* (CUJAE), founded the *Sierra Maestra* group on October 20, 1976; whose original purpose was to motivate a greater appreciation for the *son* traditional style within the Cuban people.¹⁵³

According to the information provided by Juan de Marcos himself, regarding the composition of the group: “Sierra Maestra had the typical format of the traditional *septeto habanero*: trumpet, *tres*, guitar, double bass, *claves*, *maracas* and bongo. The only thing that broke that scheme was that we used a *güiro*. We had two leading singers and the choirs played by three voices. After I left the group, they began utilizing *tumbadoras*, which we only used occasionally to play a *guaguancó* or something that required a more powerful percussion ensemble. Sometimes I orchestrated strings for certain recordings or events.”¹⁵⁴

José Antonio “Maceo” Rodríguez, one of the most prominent voices in the history of Cuban music, also participated in the founding of *Sierra Maestra*, which contributed significantly to the definition of the group's sonority and finally to its triumph. The clear and vibrant high tone of his voice can only be compared perhaps to the portentous Carlos Embale. José Antonio first appeared in the contest *Todo el mundo canta* (Everyone sings) accompanied by the ensemble, with the song *Un guanajo relleno* (A stuffed turkey), which was welcomed with great enthusiasm by the public. The group obtained a first prize at that contest, and the publicity received represented a true passport to fame for *Sierra Maestra* and its members.¹⁵⁵

In 1980, an invitation came to produce his first album, which was titled *Sierra Maestra llegó con El Guanajo Relleno*, which received the *Silver Disc* granted by the EGREM record company, and started the promotion of the group outside the nation's borders. From that moment the members of *Sierra Maestra* were immersed in an active action plan that led them to present themselves in places as varied and dissimilar as Angola, Belgium, Bulgaria, Burundi, Curaçao, Canary Islands, Congo, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Luxembourg, Madagascar and Holland, among many others. The group received numerous national awards and distinctions during the 1980s.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Ecured. *Conjunto Sierra Maestra*. http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Conjunto_Sierra_Maestra. Retrieved: 10-23-15.

¹⁵⁴ Personal communication with the author.

¹⁵⁵ Afroemérides: *José Antonio Maceo Rodríguez*. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/diego-aranda/afroem%C3%A9rides-jos%C3%A9-antonio-maceo-rodr%C3%ADguez/10151350975031570>. Retrieved: 10-23-15.

¹⁵⁶ Ecured. *Conjunto Sierra Maestra*. http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/Conjunto_Sierra_Maestra. Retrieved: 10-23-15.

According to Juan de Marcos, "... many important figures passed through Sierra Maestra, such as Jesús Alemañy (from Cubanismo), Barbarito Teuntor (from Paris 17) and Daniel Ramos (from Soneros de Verdad), among others..." and they also produced recordings with Luis Alemañy, Guajiro Mirabal, Miguel Angel "Pan con Salsa" de Armas, Tony Taño, Celeste Mendoza, Enriqueta Almanza and Icelandic rocker Bubbi Morden.¹⁵⁷

The *Sierra Maestra* group is still active and derived to a more modern style, similar to *Cuban Salsa*, which was later called *Timba*, as can be seen in a presentation of the group included in the film *Salsa* directed by Joyce Sherman Buñuel.¹⁵⁸

Another group that contributed to the revitalization of Cuban *son* during the 1980s was the *Son 14* ensemble, founded in Santiago de Cuba, in 1977, by pianist and conductor Adalberto Alvarez, along with vocalist Eduardo "El Tiburón" Morales. During the 1980s, the group recorded several albums for EGREM, which remained in the preference of the Hispanic-American public, and traveled frequently in concert tours throughout the Americas and Europe. In 1992, Adalberto Alvarez separated from the group to form his own, called *Adalberto y su Son*.¹⁵⁹

Although the instrumental composition of the group was always very variable, it showed in its beginnings a format similar to that of the old *Conjuntos* of the forties, which basically consisted of a brass section accompanied by a rhythm group, but with the inclusion of more brass and electro-acoustic instruments. In a video of the eighties we can see that the group was composed of four trumpets and a trombone; electronic guitar, bass and keyboard; as well as bongo and *tumbadoras*. Maracas and claves were also performed by the singers of the ensemble.

The *Timba* and *El Tosco*

According to some scholars that have written about this subject, the release of an album called *En la calle* (*In the street*) from the group *NG La Banda*, in 1992, initiated the *post-Songo* era in Cuban popular music, introducing a new style that was more related to *Salsa* than to the music from the previous decade.¹⁶⁰ *NG* (New Generation) *La Banda*, was a musical group

¹⁵⁷ Personal communication with the author.

¹⁵⁸ Youtube: Salsa música Sierra Maestra. Mi música es tu música.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtLHLnXYFVQ>. Retrieved: 10-26-15.

¹⁵⁹ Allmusic: *Son 14*. <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/son-14-mn0000027785>. Retrieved: 10-26-15.

¹⁶⁰ Wikipedia: *Salsa music*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salsa_music. Retrieved: 10-25-15.

founded by the Cuban flutist, composer and arranger José Luis “El Tosco” (the “tough guy”) Cortés, who debuted at the *Café Cantante Bertolt Brecht* in Havana, in 1988.¹⁶¹

José Luis Cortés studied music at the *National School of Arts* in Havana and participated in two of the most defining groups within the twentieth-century Cuban music, the *Van Van* and *Irakere*.¹⁶² In *NG La Banda*, Cortés set out to “merge the simplicity and attractiveness of Van Van’s music with the complexity and elaboration of Irakere’s style.” His first album entitled *No se puede tapar el sol* (Can’t Cover the Sun), from 1988, included some of the the band’s first hits such as the songs *La expresiva* (The expressive girl) and *Los sitios entero* (The entire Los Sitios).¹⁶³

Already before leaving the *Irakere* group, El Tosco had committed to the achievement of an experimental project related to Cuban music and Jazz. The result of that project was a group composed of “the cream of the crop” of Cuban Jazz performers at that time, which included real stars such as pianists Gonzalo Rubalcaba and Ernán López-Nussa, drummers Horacio “El Negro” Hernández and Calixto Oviedo, as well as other extraordinary instrumentalists, with whom El Tosco produced four vinyl records. That group, which was alternately called *New Generation* and *Orchestra all stars*, served as the basis of what later became *NG La Banda*.¹⁶⁴

Kevin Moore has rightly pointed out a complex series of influences that interacted to develop the style of *NG La Banda*; and those influences were contributed by the numerous musicians who collaborated with its creation. For example, singer Tony Calá was an arranger and violinist for the *Ritmo Oriental* orchestra, Isaac Delgado and percussionist Juan “Wickly” Nogeras worked with Pachito Alonso, and Germán Velazco played with the *Revé* and the *Irakere* orchestra along with José “El Greco” Crego, Carlos Averhoff and José Munguía.

According to Moore, “*NG La Banda* combined the innovations of the groups that preceded it with many others of its authorship to create a type of music that was not *songo* or *rumba*, *rock*, *jazz* or *funk*. It contained large amounts of each of those styles mixed together, but its most powerful component was something completely new; something that had been born in the streets and neighborhoods of Havana in the late 1980s as the Berlin Wall was falling. Cortés called that new style *timba*.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Ecured. *NG La Banda*. http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/NG_La_Banda. Retrieved: 10-27-15.

¹⁶² Según entrevista realizada por el periodista del Miami Herald Jordan Levin.

¹⁶³ Ecured. *NG La Banda*. http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/NG_La_Banda. Retrieved: 10-27-15.

¹⁶⁴ Timba.com: *NG La Banda*. <http://www.timba.com/artists/ng-la-banda>. Retrieved: 10-27-15.

¹⁶⁵ Timba.com: *NG La Banda*. <http://www.timba.com/artists/ng-la-banda>. Retrieved: 10-27-15.

NG La Banda was originally integrated by José Luis "El Tosco" Cortés, director, flute and voice; Juan Munguía, Elpidio Chappottin and José Miguel "El Greco" Crego, trumpets; Germán Velazco and Carlos Averhoff, saxophones; Rodolfo "Peruchín" Argudín, piano; Miguel Ángel D'Armas, keyboards; Feliciano Arango, bass; Giraldo Piloto, drums; Juan "Wickly" Nogueras, *tumbadoras*; Bárbaro Argudín, bongo; and Tony Calá and Isaac Delgado, vocalists.

The group significantly influenced most of the *timba* bands that succeeded it. For example, the famous singer Isaac Delgado subsequently created his own group; Giraldo Piloto led the *Klímax* group and was an arranger for the *Charanga Habanera* and Isaac Delgado; and Paulito FG and Manolín were also part of *NG*. Paulito sang in the chorus for the band's first recordings and Manolín was discovered by El Tosco, who christened him as "El médico de la Salsa" (The Salsa Doctor) and produced his first album.¹⁶⁶

Pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba, who also collaborated with the first initiatives of El Tosco, subsequently developed a personal technique that included the displacement of rhythmic patterns and harmonies in the *guajeos* when he participated in the orchestra of Isaac Delgado; a technique that was adopted by many other *timba* bands later.

Other important groups of *timba* were *Azúcar Negra*, *Bamboleo*, *Manolín*, *El médico de la Salsa*, *Charanga Habanera*, *Habana d'Primera*, *Klímax*, *Paulito FG*, *Tiempo Libre*, *Maykel y su Salsa Mayor* and *Pupy y los que Son, Son*.¹⁶⁷

Buena Vista Social Club

In 1994, Juan de Marcos González established a relationship with the British record label *World Circuit Records*, through which the *Sierra Maestra* ensemble recorded the classic number of Arsenio Rodríguez *Dundunbanza*. At the request of the producer and director of *World Circuit*, Nick Gold, González expanded the group by adding trumpets, piano and *tumbadoras*, with the purpose of achieving a sound similar to that of Arsenio Rodríguez, and later, he proposed to Gold an interesting project, to make a record with some personalities of the golden age of Cuban music which languished at that time in the most complete oblivion.

Nick Gold invited the famous American guitarist Ry Cooder in 1996 to participate in a recording session where two musicians from Mali, representatives of the *High-life* style, would collaborate with several Cuban musicians. It turned out that the Malian musicians could not travel to Havana, so Gold and Cooder decided to record an album of Cuban *son* with musicians from the Island,¹⁶⁸ taking advantage of the Cubans who were already hired for collaboration

¹⁶⁶ Timba.com: *NG La Banda*. <http://www.timba.com/artists/ng-la-banda>. Retrieved: 10-27-15.

¹⁶⁷ Wikipedia: *Salsa music*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salsa_music. Retrieved: 10-25-15.

¹⁶⁸ Entrevista con Ry Cooder en Los Angeles, por Betty Arcos. "The Global Village" Pacifica Radio 27 June 2000". Sitio de *Buena Vista Social Club*. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). Retrieved: 03-18-15.

with the Malian, among which were the pianist Rubén González, the bassist Orlando “Cachaíto” López, the guitarist Eliades Ochoa, and the group's leader, Juan de Marcos.

Finally, the recording of an album called *A toda Cuba le gusta* was made in March 1996, with the collaboration of Juan de Marcos, who had already been working on a project called *Afro-Cuban All Stars*. That project brought together all the veteran stars relegated to oblivion, and also others such as Ibrahim Ferrer, Pío Leyva, Manuel “Puntillita” Licea, Raúl Planas, José Antonio “Maceo” Rodríguez and Félix Baloy. Cooder himself incorporated the slide guitar into the recording.¹⁶⁹

Taking advantage of the recording sessions arranged with the group, Cooder then produced another album that was called *Buena Vista Social Club*, honoring the homonymous iconic song composed by Orestes López, father of the bassist “Cachaíto”, which was also included on the disk.¹⁷⁰

After its release, on September 17, 1997, *Buena Vista Social Club* reached the outstanding milestone of more than five million copies sold and received a *Grammy* award in 1998. The album was also included in the list of the *500 Great Albums of All Times* published by Rolling Stone magazine, based in New York.¹⁷¹

In 1998, Ry Cooder began working together with the famous German film director Wim Wenders in a documentary about *Buena Vista Social Club*, which was released in September 1999. The film included scenes of the group's concerts in Amsterdam and the Carnegie Hall in New York, in 1998, as well as shots of group members watching the stores and commenting on the trip and the city. The film was an outstanding box office success, raised more than twenty-three million dollars worldwide, and was nominated for an *Oscar* for best documentary in 1999.¹⁷²

Some images of a video from Buena Vista Social Club's recording sessions, directed by Juan de Marcos and produced by Ry Cooder, show the following instrumentation: four trumpets, piano, double bass, drums, *paila* (*timbales*), bongo, *tumbadora*, *claves* and maracas. Cooder also participated in the recording of some of the numbers, providing the sound of the electric guitar.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Wikipedia: Afro-Cuban All Stars. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afro-Cuban_All_Stars#cite_note-ACASToda-3. Retrieved: 10-29-15.

¹⁷⁰ Wikipedia: Buena Vista Social Club. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buena_Vista_Social_Club#cite_note-interview-5. Retrieved: 10-29-15.

¹⁷¹ Rolling Stone 500. #260: *Buena Vista Social Club*. Rolling Stone Magazine. Retrieved: 03-18-20017.

¹⁷² Rose, Charlie. *Buena Vista Social Club: PBS Interview with Ry Cooder and Wim Wenders PBS* (17 September, 1999). Retrieved: 11-02-15.

¹⁷³ Youtube: Buena Vista Social Club – *Cienfuegos tiene su guaguancó*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZFAKZwtYdI>. Retrieved: 10-29-15.

Cubatón

Cubatón is a generic modality recently cultivated in Cuba, which consists of the fusion of elements from *Reggaeton* with other elements of Cuban music. The Cuban government declared *Cubatón* a *degenerate artistic expression* in 2011, and restricted its radio broadcasting because of its coarse sexual content. In December 2012, the government officially banned *Cubatón's* songs with explicit content on radio and television.¹⁷⁴

Reggaeton is a derivative of a style of *Reggae* sung in Spanish from Panama, that combines certain influences of *Jamaican Dancehall* and *Soca Trinitaria* with other Latin-American genres such as *salsa*, *bomba*, *hip-hop* and *electronics*. Within this style, *hip-hop* elements are sung and rapped.

In *Reggaeton*, an underlying rhythmic pattern, called *Dembow riddim* stands out, which is very similar to the cross-rhythm characteristic of the 19th century Havana's *contradance*; which combines the *Cuban tresillo* on a high pitch level, with a lower pitch rhythmic pulse that follows the beats of a binary measure. This rhythm may appear in various versions or *riddims*, some of which have been called *Bam Bam riddim*, *Hot This Year riddim*, *Little Man Jam riddim*, *Fever Pitch riddim*, *Red Alert riddim*, *Trailer Reloaded riddim* and *Big Up riddim*. The *Dembow rhythm* was popularized in the 1990s by Jamaican dancehall singer *Shabba Ranks*, as it appears on his album *Just Reality*.¹⁷⁵

With the *Cubatón* we fully enter into the culminating stage of an evolution that began with the first *rock* groups during the mid-fifties in Cuba, which was that of the total electrification of the processing and generation of sound. As well as in other musical genres already mentioned before, in this one the accompaniment of the voice is not produced by means of instruments executed in real time, but with electronic equipment whose sounds are manipulated, edited and recorded in a studio, before the live presentation of the participating artists.

The most utilized instruments in the *Cubatón* are equipment such as the *synthesizer*, an electronic musical instrument designed to produce artificially generated sounds, using techniques such as additive or subtractive synthesis, frequency modulation and physical modeling or phase modulation; the *keyboards*, electronic devices that can reproduce many sounds, similar or not to those produced by other instruments; the *drum machine (rhythm machine)*, an electronic instrument that allows composing, programming and reproducing rhythm patterns by means of an internal sequencer and a percussion sound generator; and the *sampler*, an electronic instrument that is able to copy or record sound sequences, called *samples*, that can be

¹⁷⁴ Cuban Government to Censor Reggaeton For Being "Sexually Explicit", *Pop Crush*, Diciembre 7 de 2012.

¹⁷⁵ Wikipedia: *Reggaeton*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reggaeton#Cuba>. Retrieved: 10/30/15.

subsequently reproduced just as they were recorded, or either transformed by electro-acoustic effects.¹⁷⁶

In 2014, *Gente D'Zona* Cubatón group became a focal point of international popular music with a number called *Bailando*, which was created in collaboration with Spanish singer Enrique Iglesias and Cuban Descemer Bueno. The song received three Latin Grammy Awards and was widely disseminated throughout the world.¹⁷⁷ *Gente D'Zona* was founded in the Habanero neighborhood of *Alamar*, which is known as the cradle of *Cuban hip-hop*.¹⁷⁸

Cuban Hip Hop

Hip-hop appears in the sixties among young African-Americans living in the South of the Bronx neighborhood in New York, and is characterized by four distinctive elements, *rap* music, *turnablism* or *DJing*, *b-boying* and the visual art of *graffiti*.¹⁷⁹

Hip-hop music began with *DJ Kool Herc* and other imitators, who created rhythms based on song fragments where some percussive pattern was emphasized, usually using the circular (turntable) plates of old 33 RPM players. That music served as basis, at a later time, for the rhythmic improvisation of rhymed texts called *rap*, and for *beatboxing*, a vocal rhythmic technique by which percussive sounds similar to those generated by some electro-acoustic equipment were imitated. These manifestations were also related to peculiar dance styles, as well as certain tendencies in the way of dressing and personal appearance.

Hip-hop has now spread worldwide and is considered one of the most influential styles in international contemporary popular music. The sampling technique, which consists in the re-use of fragments taken from previous recordings in new sound structures, relates this style to other precedent or coexisting ones, such as blues, jazz, salsa, rag-time, rock 'n roll, soul, funk and rhythm and blues.

Apparently, *hip-hop* music penetrated the Cuban population through radio and television programs broadcast in Miami, Florida, during the 1980s. Initially, local creation was more concentrated in dance than in music, but with the arrival in the nineties of the so-called *special period*, a time of great economic austerity caused by the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuban

¹⁷⁶ Wikipedia: *Reggaeton*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reggaeton#Cuba>. Retrieved: 10/30/15.

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.axs.com/gente-de-zona-wins-three-latin-grammy-awards-for-their-worldwide-hit-b-29554>. Retrieved: 10/31/15.

¹⁷⁸ Wikipedia: *Reggaeton*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reggaeton#Cuba>. Retrieved: 10/31/15.

¹⁷⁹ Chang, Jeff; DJ Kool Herc: *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop*. Generation. Macmillan. ISBN 0-312-30143-X. 2005. Retrieved: 10-31-15.

rappers, called *moneros*, were encouraged to look for new ways to express their dissatisfaction with the country's politic-economic situation.

In the beginning, *rap* was ignored and belittled in Cuba because it was considered an imported genre from the capitalist world, but by the end of the 1990s it was already officially declared as a true expression of national culture. At that time the government created the *Cuban Rap Agency*, which promoted an official *State recording agency*, as well as a publication dedicated to the genre. During that period, a *hip-hop music festival* was also created. The emergence of rap in Cuba coincided with the era of *gangsta rap* in the United States, which included famous rappers such as *2Pac*, *Notorious B.I.G.*, *Ice-T*, *Snoop Dogg* and others.¹⁸⁰

The regime's complacency with *hip-hop* did not take long to change, when the *rappers* began to express their frustration with the surrounding reality, and their activity moved to underground clandestine space of meetings, in small private premises called *house parties* (homemade parties) or *bonches* in Spanish.¹⁸¹

In the mid-1990s, the situation became more favorable for Cuban citizens to have direct interaction with tourists, and therefore to obtain certain foreign currency gains through the exchange of products and services. That situation also benefited the *hip-hop* environment, in whose shows some innovations were introduced, such as the dances of *el despelote*, *el tembleque* and the *subasta de la cintura*, in which a female dancer performed fast movements, shakes and flips in the area that extends between the shoulders and the pelvis (similar to those of the *hula-hoop* or *belly dancing*), frequently accompanied by gestures similar to those of sexual self-complacency. These dances made a big difference with respect to the traditional couple dances in the style of *hip-hop*.¹⁸²

New York music critic Alex Ross explains how *hip-hop* music emerged from certain ingenious applications of technology in the following paragraph: "... Hip-hop, the preponderant popular [art] form during the turn of the century, gives us the most electrifying demonstration of the power of technology [...] The genre emerged in the desperately impoverished ghettos composed of high building complexes, where families lacked the minimum resources necessary to buy musical instruments for their children, and where even the most rudimentary way of making music seemed out of reach. But music was created anyway: the phonograph itself became an instrument. In the South Bronx during the 1970s, some DJs such as Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa and Grandmaster Flash used turntables to create a thrilling combination of effects -

¹⁸⁰ Pacini-Hernandez, Deborah y Reebee Garofalo: *The emergence of Rap Cubano: An historical perspective*. En music space, and place, ed. Whitely, Bennett, and Hawkins. BurlingtonVt. Ashgate, 2004, p. , 89-107.

¹⁸¹ Baker, Geoffrey. *La Habana que no conoces: Cuban rap and the social construction of urban space*. Ethnomusicology Forum 15, no. 2, 2006, p. 215-46.

¹⁸² Wikipedia: *Cuban hip-hop*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_hip_hop#cite_note-autogenerated3-2. Retrieved: 11-01-15.

recurring sequences (loops), pauses (breaks), percussive sounds (beats) and grated or scratched sounds. Later, the DJs used the technique of digital sampling in the studios, with the purpose of assembling some of the densest sound mixing structures in the history of music: *Paid in Full* by Eric B. and Rakim; *Fear of a Black Planet*, by Public Enemy and *The Chronic*, by Dr. Dre.”¹⁸³

Just like the *Cubatón*, modern *hip-hop* used samplers, sequencers, drum machines, synthesizers, turntable plates and live instruments. *Los Aldeanos*, *Orishas* and *Clan 537* are some of the most famous Cuban hip-hop groups. More recently, a fusion of elements of *Cubatón* style with *hip-hop* called *Guapanga* has captured the attention of the Cuban and international audience. Some of the soloists and groups representing this trend are *El Protagonista*, *Los Incomparables*, *Papito Sabrosura*, as well as *Chakal & Jakarta*.

Conclusion

As we have seen throughout this essay, music has occupied an important space in the social and cultural activities of Cuba since its discovery in the 16th century; and the largest island of the Antilles has established itself as an important exporter of novel musical styles and genres since the 19th century.

Throughout its history, and particularly after 1960, the Cuban people have faced multiple limitations and troubles with notable ingenuity and talent; and against all odds, it has managed to maintain a prominent position on the world music scene, both popular and academic, until the present time.

We hope that the state of manifest social and economic decay in which the Island is currently immersed may be overcome sooner than later, and that this transformation will allow the continuity and future development, in a free and prosperous Cuba, of the outstanding aptitudes that the Cuban people have shown to possess for the musical and artistic creation.

¹⁸³ Ross, Alex: *Listen to This. Fourth Estate*. ISBN 978-0-00-731906-0, 2010, p. 60.

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